Advanced Photoshop®

The magazine for Adobe® Photoshop® professionals

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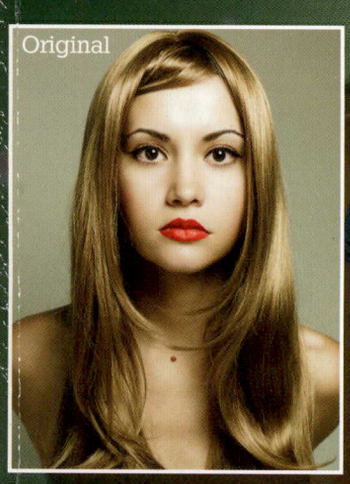
- Paint striking characters and dramatic scenes
- Create photoreal mattes for films
- Make sequential art for graphic novels
- Hand colour a monochrome image
- Design conceptual graphic art



CREATIVE RETOUCHING

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Editorial

Welcome to Advanced Photoshop

Photoshop has made significant artistic inroads into many different industries – and the graphic novel industry is no exception.

This month we speak to a selection of popular digital artists who work on the modern-day comic book, using Photoshop in their workflow to create detailed and realistic paintings that tell a story. Our main interview is with Radical Publishing, whose graphic novels are richly coloured and painted, showing just how tangible digital art can be. I'm sure that you will enjoy all the great examples of artwork in these features.

We follow the comic-book theme in our digital painting tutorial this month, which looks at creating a striking female character and placing her into a scene, giving the viewer the background story in a glance. If movies are more your thing, we also look at how to design realistic digital mattes, like those produced for the film industry – you can even use your holiday snaps to create amazing backdrops.

Of course, we have plenty more tutorials this month, covering hand colouring, turning portrait images into manga artwork, mixed media collages and creative illustrations. All the project files for these tutorials can be found on our packed free disc at the back of the issue.

If you have invested in an iPad recently, then turn to page 80, as we count down the top ten apps for creatives and explore their uses. Many of them are available in iPhone versions too.

I hope you enjoy this issue, but do drop me a line if you have any comments or suggestions.

Julie Easton
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www.facebook.com/AdvancedPhotoshop

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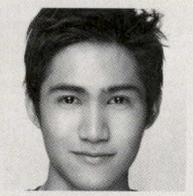
www.alexpopescu.net

ROB SHIELDS
Based in Philadelphia, self-taught digital artist Rob explores a wide variety of commercial and self-initiated projects. To see his latest works and find out where his images are currently on display visit his portfolio.
www.robshields.net



BRYAN SOLA
Bryan Sola is a Multimedia Arts graduate from Asia Pacific College and is currently working as a concept, texture and 3D artist in one of the Philippines' biggest game services company, Ladyluck Digital Media.
www.bpsola.deviantart.com

TIM SHELBOURNE
Trained as a traditional artist, Tim Shelbourne made the switch to digital many years ago and now specialises in Photoshop and Painter. Tim is also a regular contributor to **Photoshop Creative**.
www.timshelbourne.net

ADAM SMITH
Adam is the reviews editor at **Advanced Photoshop**. This month he tries his hand at more new styles, discovering fresh techniques and applying his long-standing Photoshop skills to manga.
www.advancedphotoshop.co.uk/user/Adam

DANIELLE DIXON
After graduating in Illustration, Dani has been working in the publishing industry sampling many digital drawing programs. Photoshop is still her favourite for the high degree of creativity it offers artists.

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The next issue of **Advanced Photoshop** goes on sale 30 November 2010

Advanced Photoshop
The magazine for professionals by professionals

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Cover image

Our cover this issue is the result of a fantastic workshop on designing manga-style portraits using stock images and Photoshop's tools. It is created using mostly the Liquify and Transform tools. We have uncovered the best settings for each of these tools to give professional and authentic effects, and we also explore how to use masks and layers to blend the image together seamlessly.

Turn to page 62 to follow the tutorial

Imageer:
ADAM SMITH

"Created using mostly the Liquify and Transform tools"

Advanced Photoshop
The magazine for professionals by professionals

FREE DISC INSIDE!

www.advancedphotoshop.co.uk

Every issue of **Advanced Photoshop** comes with a free CD, which you can find at the back of the magazine. Here you will find exclusive video tutorials, free brushes, stock images and textures, inspirational artwork from our gallery website, helpful PDF articles and more. Turn to page 96 to see what we have in store for you this month.

Issue 116 inside

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Check out our create the cover tutorial on page 62 this issue, where you can learn how to turn your photos into manga creations

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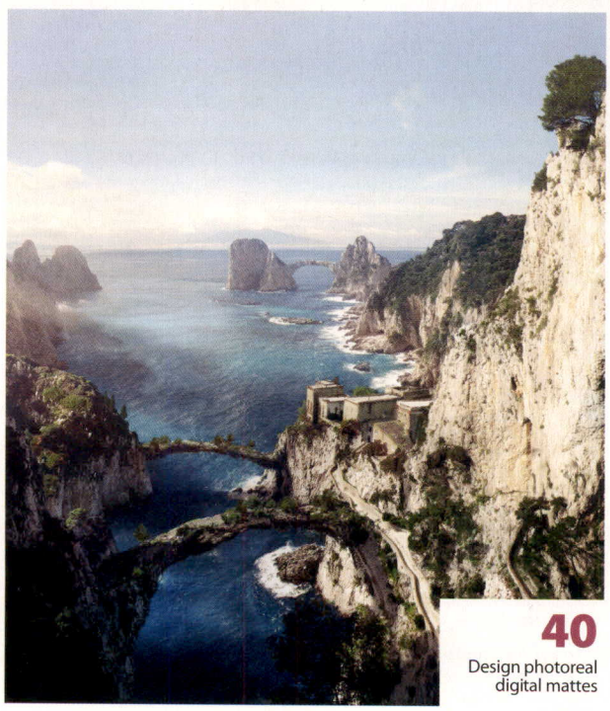
Paint stunning female concept characters

62
Turn your photos into manga-style artwork



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Superb stock art, project files and more!

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Subscribe now!
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Dedicated to displaying the best work submitted to **Advanced Photoshop**, including the inspiring gallery and our picks from the website

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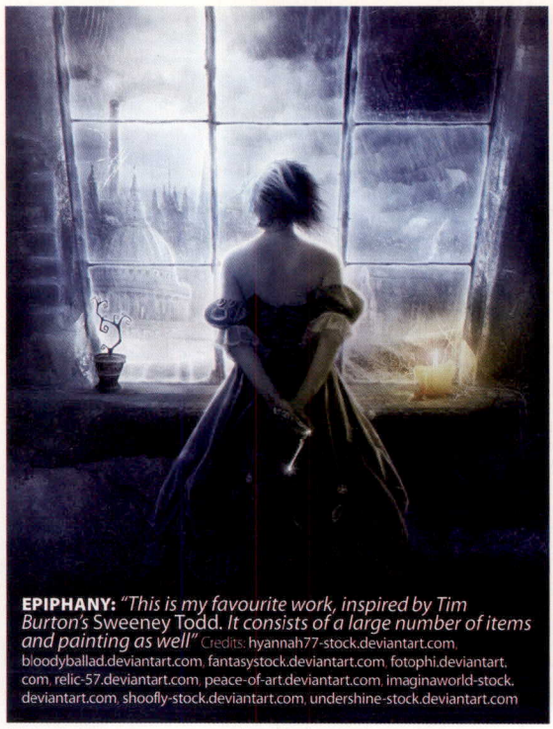
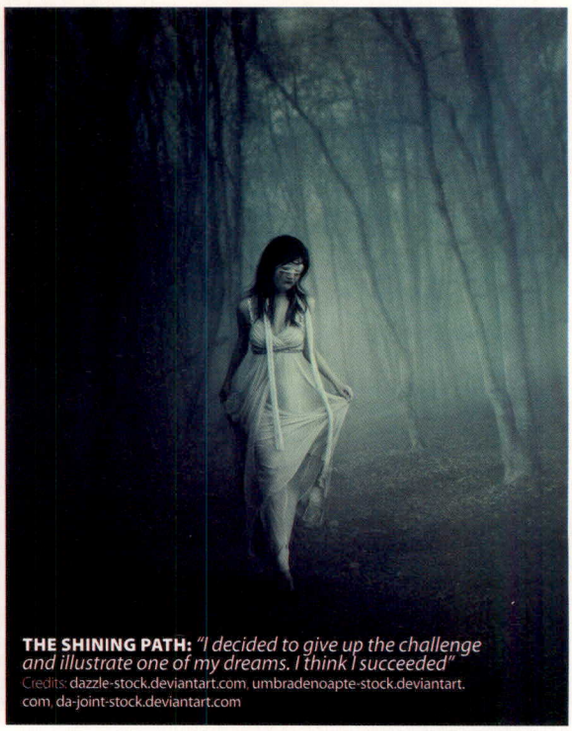


EPIPHANY: *"This is my favourite work, inspired by Tim Burton's* Sweeney Todd. *It consists of a large number of items and painting as well"* Credits: hyannah77-stock.deviantart.com, bloodyballad.deviantart.com, fantasystock.deviantart.com, fotophi.deviantart.com, relic-57.deviantart.com, peace-of-art.deviantart.com, imaginaworld-stock.deviantart.com, shoofly-stock.deviantart.com, undershine-stock.deviantart.com



THE SHINING PATH: *"I decided to give up the challenge and illustrate one of my dreams. I think I succeeded"* Credits: dazzle-stock.deviantart.com, umbradenoapte-stock.deviantart.com, da-joint-stock.deviantart.com

Getting to know...

ALINA NATALIA ŚLIWIŃSKA

We speak to one member of the Advanced Photoshop online community

About the interviewee

Style Photomanipulation and digital painting

Personal website http://lady-amarillis.deviantart.com

Bio Alina Natalia Śliwińska is otherwise known as Lady Amarillis and is a popular photomanipulator and digital painter with a distinct style of art that is often instantly recognised. Her deviantART gallery is packed with wonderful examples of her artwork.

Alina Natalia Śliwińska – aka Lady Amarillis – has been working hard on photomanipulations since she saw the work of other artists on the popular community site, deviantART. This encouraged her to start working with Photoshop herself: "It wasn't easy to begin with. I started out with simple things, such as text with effects. This helped me to learn the fundamental tools and the work became better. But I have not stopped learning and every day I'm trying to be better and better all the time." We catch up with the talented artist to find out more about her techniques and inspirations.

Advanced Photoshop: How do you use Photoshop in your artwork?

Alina Natalia Śliwińska: Photoshop is, for me, like a pencil and a piece of paper. I can create images including many elements from different sources. Issues such as lighting, shadows and colour matching are no longer a problem. I realised my visions with this program.

Advanced Photoshop: Do you think you have a particular style?

Alina Natalia Śliwińska: I don't know if I have my own style – time will tell! My work is inspired by music, books and movies, and allows me to display my emotions. The characteristics of my artwork are the amount of detail, colours and themes... I have heard some say that my work can be identified from a thumbnail!

Advanced Photoshop: What are your ambitions for the future with your art?

Alina Natalia Śliwińska: In the future I would like to create illustrations for books, album covers for famous bands, film posters, advertisements for prestigious magazines and everything that will allow me to combine my skills and imagination with the pleasure of creation.

Advanced Photoshop: Do you have anything else you'd like to mention?

Alina Natalia Śliwińska: I wish that there was less jealousy between photomanipulators, and more support to inspire each other and discuss work. I would also like to see photomanipulators more appreciated for their work.

INSOMNIA: *"I wanted this work to show insomnia and to present its accompanying emotions. The work is part of a series inspired by the band Scar For Life"* Credits: fetishfaerie-stock.deviantart.com, almudena-stock.deviantart.com

On the web...

www.advancedphotoshop.co.uk

PICTURES OF THE WEEK ● WEB CHALLENGE WINNERS ● TWITTER

See below for our pictures of the week from inspiring artists on the **Advanced Photoshop** gallery. Our website and readers' forum is perfect for showing off Photoshop creations. We present the best images on the site this month. Upload to get your images here next issue!

Sandeep Karunakaran

Fallen
www.advancedphotoshop.co.uk/user/Sanskarans

"I wanted to create a cinematic feel for the picture, just going for that silent apocalyptic environment. I want all the viewers to feel that silence of impending doom"

Patrick Kleinfercher

Fistball in Motion
www.advancedphotoshop.co.uk/user/dukepk

"This is a sport advertising image for a fistball catalogue. In order to set the definition, the hard look was perfect for me"

Over 24,500 images already uploaded!

Lady Amarillis

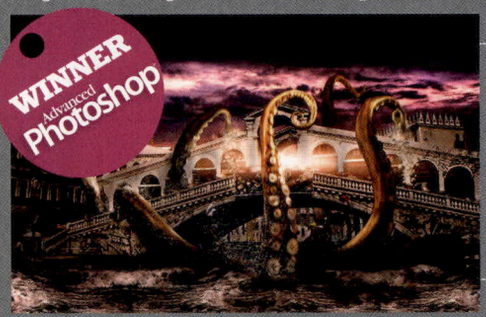
One By One
www.advancedphotoshop.co.uk/user/LadyAmarillis

"I did this work when I collaborated with the band Scar For Life. I listened to the material from the band's first album, and so the title is taken from the track" Credits: alinepotter-stock.deviantart.com, hobbitpunk.deviantart.com, maureenolder.deviantart.com, chop-stock.deviantart.com

CHALLENGE WINNERS

Reference: **AP 075**

Check out the website for details of our latest challenge and how to enter. The winner will collect a special prize for that month (prizes change frequently) and will also have their design printed in the magazine, along with the runner-up.



Alex Lanier

Bridge Closed
www.laniercreations.com

"I wanted to create a sci-fi action scene with a dark grunge look. It took 3.5 hours to complete"

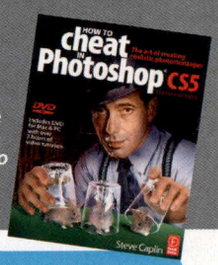
Aaron Robinson

Price of Time
http://advancedphotoshop.co.uk/user/photoshopphreak

"I wanted to send the message that nothing lasts forever so live as much as you can today"

You win!

A copy of *How To Cheat In Photoshop CS5* by Steve Caplin, courtesy of Focal Press (**www.focalpress.com**). This book is the latest in the popular *How To Cheat* series, showing how to build realistic photomontages. It also comes with a free DVD.



Twitter feedback advancedpshop

We asked: 'Which websites do you find the most inspirational for looking at great examples of digital art?'

@moonjam: www.cghub.com

@tabname: deviantART, I think :)

@shell150675: www.deviantart.com is good. Lots of Photoshop stuff on there.

@JillTovey: www.booooooom.com and http://ffffound.com

Join in the chat now at twitter.com/advancedpshop, or via Facebook at facebook.com/AdvancedPhotoshop and you could see your comments here!

GALLERY

We showcase the very best of your artwork

Featured artists

Mel Zahar
http://melzahar.daportfolio.com

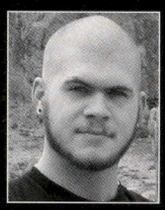
"I'm a 22-year-old graphic designer in love with this profession! My specialities range from simple illustration to digital art and branding, and I've been developing my style since I started learning Photoshop two years ago."

Daniël Matakupan
www.danielmatakupan.nl

"I'm a 24-year-old student and graphic designer from The Netherlands. I have a passion for design, and five years' experience with PS. Currently I am studying Communication & Multimedia Design at the NHL Hogeschool in Leeuwarden."

Tarin Yuangtrakul
www.behance.net/tabbydesign

"I'm 18 and currently studying Graphic Design at Chulalongkorn University, Thailand. Graphic design and illustration are my two favourite fields. My style is presentation drawing and digital art. I mostly use Photoshop and Illustrator."



Justin Otte
www.behance.net/jotte

"I'm a 25-year-old digital artist from San Francisco, CA, and have been using Photoshop for two-and-a-half years. I will be attending City College of San Francisco in spring 2011 to get my Certificate in Art, and hopefully build up for a higher degree."

Get featured

The quickest and easiest way to get your artwork on these pages is to create a gallery on our website

1. Create a gallery

Visit our website (below) and click on the Join Now option to follow the simple registration process.

www.advancedphotoshop.co.uk

2. Upload your artwork

Upload your favourite images to the gallery for others to view and comment on. We'll select the best each month to appear on these pages.

You can also submit imagery directly to us for consideration. Send a high-quality JPEG or compressed TIFF to advancedpshop@imagine-publishing.co.uk, with the subject line 'Community Gallery'. You can also submit images by post on a CD to: Community Gallery, Advanced Photoshop, Imagine Publishing, Richmond House, 33 Richmond Hill, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH2 6EZ, United Kingdom. Please note that images should be available as 300dpi uncompressed TIFFs or PSDs, 15 x 15cm minimum to appear in print.

Mel Zahar

"I've always been thinking about the war running between good and evil and how, sadly, evil wins a lot of the time. Chess has always represented this war perfectly with its colours of black and white, so I drew a battle on a chessboard. White pieces are getting defeated; a white piece away from the battle is surrounded by black pieces. The shiny colours on the board express how luxurious the black pieces are. The image was made with Photoshop CS5"

CONSPIRATION © Mel Zahar

Daniël Matakupan

This is one of my favourite designs. I love to use different colours and emotion when I design. Most of the techniques are done in Photoshop with the Pen, Shape and Brush tools. I also used the Smudge tool for the fusion of the mountains into the piece. The grunge effect is mixed with some subtle vector elements created in Illustrator and I've chosen a soft colour palette with splashes of colour and diagonal lines for the final touch

ONE MOMENT IN TIME © Daniël Matakupan

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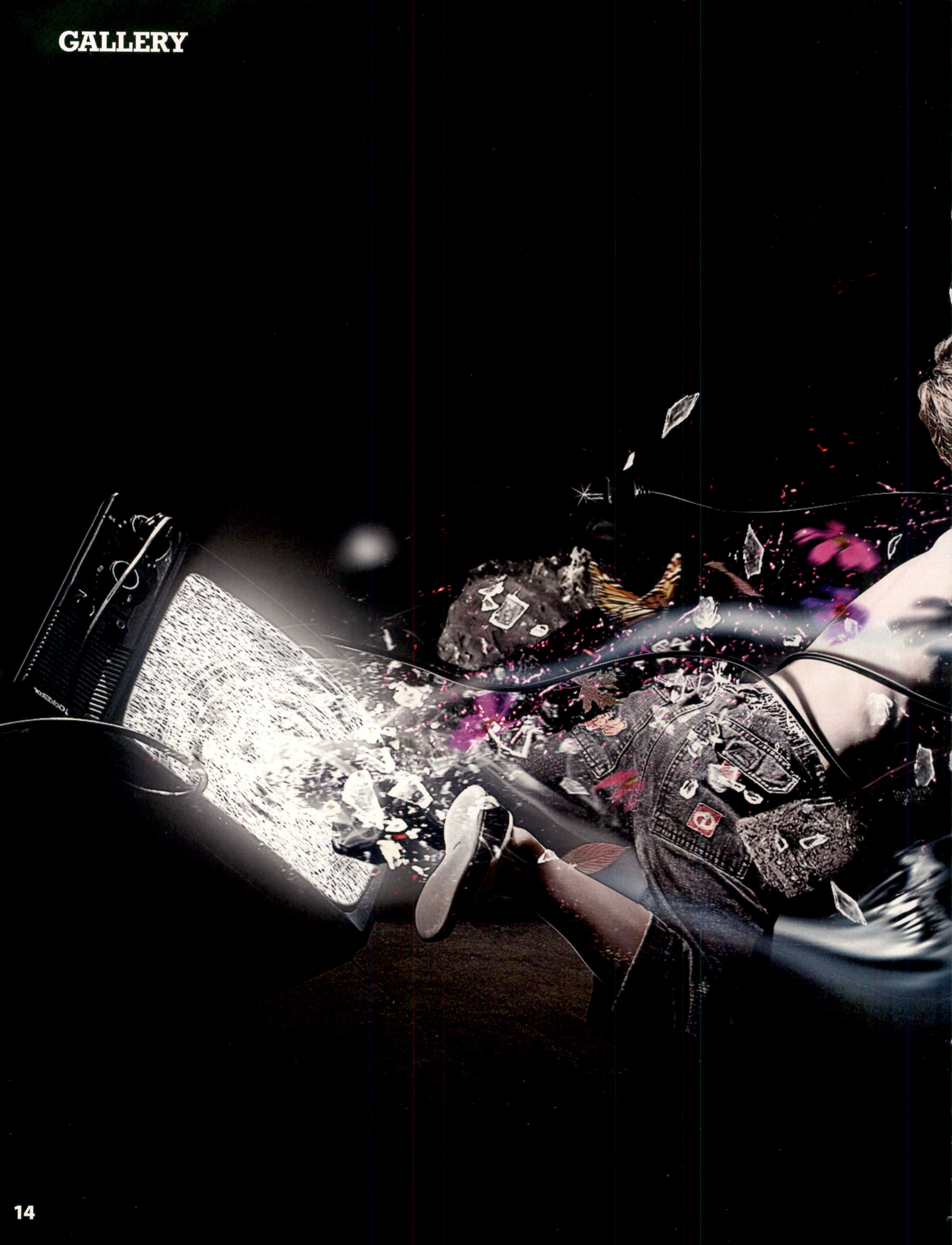
** Calls cost 6p per minute from a BT landline, calls from other operators and mobiles may be higher.



Justin Otte

I should be well-known for my poor naming of projects, so I thought I might as well just name this *Poltergeist 2*, since I already have a work titled *Poltergeist*. This was about 20 hours' work. The smoke textures I created using the Pen tool and drawing paths of white, and then using the Smudge tool. I then added in some real smoke and smudged that too. The stock used was from Stock.XCHNG, Photocase and deviantART, etc

POLTERGEIST 2 © Justin Otte

Tarin Yuangtrakul

The concept for this work was 'Cover up your real face with your beautiful skin'. It means you can't judge someone by the first meeting. This is a pencil drawing, edited with Photoshop. I used the Brush tool for colour and textures and added vectors from Illustrator

TEARING OUT © Tarin Yuangtrakul

LOOKING FOR: GUY ON CELLPHONE, WEARING WHITE SUIT THAT HE BOUGHT IN 1987, CARRYING HUGE BLACK TRAVEL CASE. AND BY THE WAY, HE SHOULD BE RIDING A CAMEL.

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RADICAL PUBLISHING

We explore the publisher's five core principles helping to create cinematic comic experiences

MATA HARI ON STAGE: *"This production rendering is for a graphic novel called* Mata Hari, *created and written by Rich Wilkes. My whole idea behind this image was to capture the true beauty of Mata Hari dancing on stage"* © 2010 Radical Publishing, Inc and Rich Wilkes

RICHARD AND SALADIN (LEFT): *"This illustration was art directed by Barry Levine to be the first image created for* Assassins: Sword of the Apocalypse. *The artist here is Meduzarts Digital Environment Studio and the team set a really high standard"* © 2010 Radical Publishing, Inc and Ground:zero Productions Ltd

In only its third year of existence, comic publishing house Radical has kindled its own success as much as it has ignited readers' imaginations, making a great first impression on the industry.

Awarded the Diamond Comic Distributor 'Best New Publisher' Gem award in 2009 and picked for 2010 Best Publisher award by Ain't It Cool News' annual comic awards, it all started when publisher Barry Levine and art director Jeremy Berger took advantage of Levine's film and publishing industry contacts. The pair started out developing concepts and characters, which – in effect – enabled them to hit the ground running. Investment came knocking only a year later. "Because of my background as a designer and photographer, people used to say that in a lot of my album covers and photographs I painted with light. Since I've always been a big fan of artists like William Turner and an equally huge fan of graphic novels, I decided that to give Radical distinction we would need to have a very painted style, whether it was hand, watercolour or Photoshopped," explains Levine.

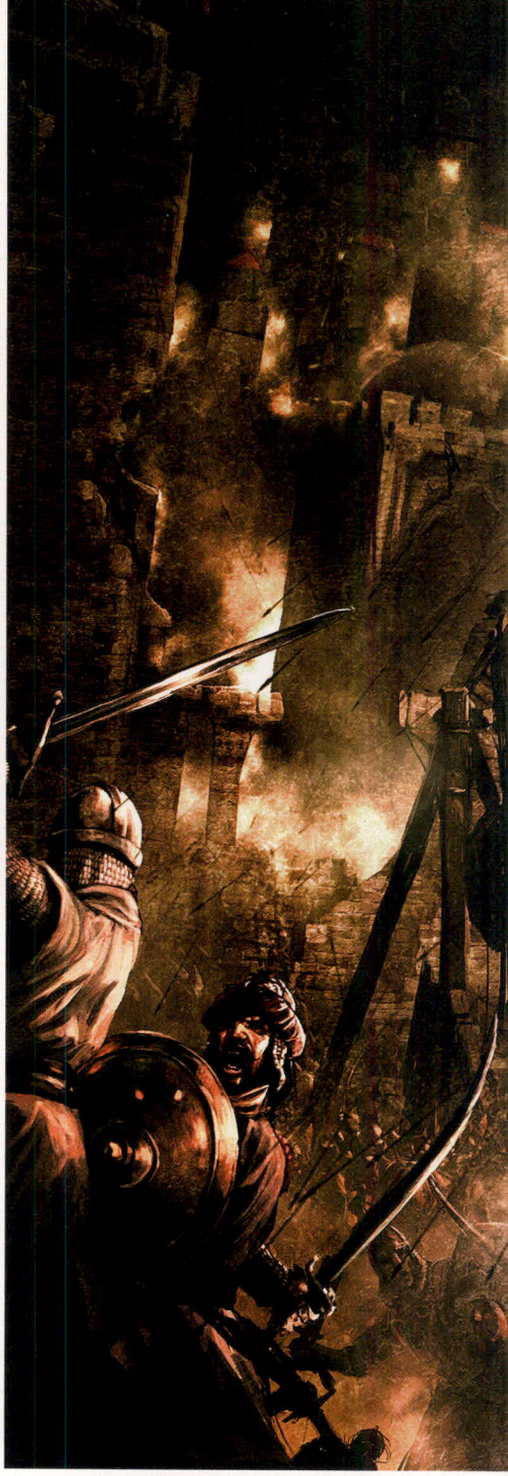
SETTING THE BENCHMARK

Since the genesis of Radical the pair have worked closely, structuring Radical themes and production with the same attentive eyes. Their initial strategy was a modest one, finding that less was definitely more, as Berger reveals: "This enabled our fan base to identify with a very specific genre. We're now engaged in storytelling of all kinds – we create sci-fi, fantasy, crime, horror, supernatural, dramas and period pieces. We're not as restricted as we were in the beginning. We're now also looking into four quadrant projects," which is the four core demographics of audiences: young, adult, male and female.

It wasn't long before the publishing house was producing recognisable titles. *Hercules: The Thracian Wars* and *Caliber: First Canon of Justice* were then benchmark titles. Levine continues: "*Caliber*'s cover was very cinematic, and the art for both made an instant impression on fans and critics alike." Berger adds: "Those projects were really what set the bar for Radical. Coming out of the gates with two great stories where the art had a beautifully painted style, with very abstract and cinematic panel designs really set a precedent. Being a part of these two books allowed me to understand what goes into creating comics and, let me tell you, it isn't an easy task!" Berger believes that a lot of concept artists come into this industry thinking that they will be able to breeze through four or five pages a week no problem, but he warns: "They get a very quick reality check when revisions are sent back and forth until the quality is 100 per cent. Barry Levine sets a very strict high standard when it comes to art, and we don't accept anything other than perfection, which I feel is evidenced in *Hercules* and *Caliber*."

The majority of the artists Radical hires for its books are either from Levine's past projects or are found by Berger on the web. "Once I find an artist that I feel can create the quality of work we

Interview



» are looking for, I present him or her to Barry and he will advise whether he feels they are right for the project or not," Berger explains. "Most of the artists that we work with don't ever really get the chance to work on stories like the ones Radical publishes, so we enjoy giving them the opportunity to explore the universe that we're creating. I think it's really incredible to see how excited artists get, especially digital painters, when contacted. It's a definite thrill for me."

Radical's style of art is very different from most companies in this field. It approaches art using a very realistic and cinematic stylisation while still maintaining a painterly look. Using unique colour palettes that embellish the line art and overall story, the publisher works very closely with the artists on every project to make sure that each has a unique look, which can stand on its own and as part of the rest of the portfolio. "We also use unique camera perspectives and panel designs that help the story to flow in a succinct manner," says Levine. "Finally, we make sure that, when appropriate, the art has a defined brushstroke texture that helps create depth and a type of realism that doesn't occur when the art is smooth and slick."

CASINO SHOOTOUT: *"This production rendering was used in the production portfolio that helped sell this project to DreamWorks. Created for* EARP: Saints for Sinners, *Ryohei Hase did an incredible job bringing the art direction to life"* © 2010 Radical Publishing, Inc, Matt Cirulnick and David Manpearl

SIEGE OF ACRE (RIGHT): *"Meduzarts Digital Environment Studio illustrated this image and they really did a superb job. This image is for one of our first hybrid-illustrated novels,* Assassins: Sword of the Apocalypse" © 2010 Radical Publishing, Inc and Ground:zero Productions Ltd

CREATIVE HARD LINE

As a contemporary publishing house, Radical looks to produce innovative styles throughout its portfolio. This is essentially what drives the acceptance of only high-quality work. However, not to make publication seem completely unattainable, Berger explains what it takes to be an artist in the Radical setup. "There are five qualities I look for when making my selections. First, how does the artist approach each image with regard to camera angle and perspective? Second, does the artist understand how to create depth using the foreground, midground and background? Third, does the artist create and utilise textures that embellish the art and make the main focus of the image pop to the eye? Fourth, does the artist spend as much time on mid- and background character detail as they do on the foreground characters. Finally, which is one of the biggest challenges I find with most artists, are they able to create realistic, detailed, but painterly faces?" These five factors are really what Radical looks at when searching and hiring artists for its comic portfolio, as well as production renderings. However, some art that the company creates doesn't include characters, but rather environments. "In that case, character detail isn't required, but the other four elements become even more important," adds Berger.

Photoshop plays a pivotal role in helping produce, present and obtain these lofty design standards, as Berger reveals: "Basically Photoshop revolutionised the way art is created today, as it allows artists to work faster as well as easily make multiple revisions. One of the ways Radical is able to keep the level of quality at an all-time high is the amount of time we spend on each image to reach perfection. This is a precedent that Barry has implemented and I believe it's a [main part of the] recipe for our success." Radical is currently using Photoshop for all the paintings produced for its titles. The firm also uses Painter in many instances. Berger says: "In addition, we use Photoshop to do all the prep work for our books, ads and design work. Our in-house designer, Nick Cabugos, has completely taught himself Photoshop and all of the Adobe programs, and that has allowed him to become a true master of the trade."

Berger is keen to justify the belief in these five core values and productivity of our favourite apps, through recent projects being produced by Radical artists. "I would have to say the most exciting project I have been working on is *Oblivion*. Working closely with Joseph Kosinski, director of *TRON: Legacy*, and his assistant Emily Cheung has been an incredible experience. Also the artist, Andrée Wallin, is a superstar and really understands what we're looking for on this project. Being able to work so closely with Kosinski allows me to really understand his approach to each image and the way his eye works when creating art. This is an exciting project because we are doing this book as a hybrid-illustrated novel, meaning that there will be roughly 40 fully-painted landscape images to accompany the prose, which will amount to about 25,000 words. Due to its groundbreaking nature, this format will

Radical Publishing

> We're making great stories that can translate into different formats

SHAMBHALA (RIGHT): *"This is a production rendering I worked very closely on with Barry Levine. He wanted to create a city that was similar to Rio de Janeiro slums, and set it at the base of the Himalayas"*
© 2009-2010 Radical Publishing, Inc

also allow Radical to innovate in the digital publishing space, so it's amazing to be a part of the progression of the interactive reading experiences that are becoming available. Keep an eye out for this book in 2011."

LASTING IMPRESSION

Another memorable project that has the pair excited is the *The Last Days of American Crime* comic mini series, created and written by Rick Remender and illustrated by Greg Tocchini. "Rick is a superb writer and with this project he really had the freedom to let his mind run free," explains

Interview

Berger. "Greg was able to bring Rick's story to life through his extremely cinematic approach." When reading this comic in the office, we found each page panel beautifully crafted and, when reading the book, you're immersed in an almost cinematic experience, as if you're watching a film by a very stylised director. Berger continues: "Greg understands camera perspective and his quality of art has really set the bar as far as comics go. He also used a unique approach, which creates an almost watercolour style. This is a very tricky technique and I think Greg is a master of his trade. It was also really great working with superstar Alex Maleev on his cover art for the project. Alex, in my opinion, is one of the best artists in the world, as he – just like Greg – understands the cinematic and atmospheric approach to art. Alex is able to create a very textured and realistic look to his work, which perfectly aligns itself with our style."

It seems that cinematic quality is the culmination of Radical's five creative disciplines, lending itself to previsualisation work. The company's high concepts are universal and

Radical Publishing

DESCENT INTO ARCHIPELAGO (ABOVE): *"This was a fun image to create because I worked with my good friend Tae Young Choi. The image was for* After Dark, *created by Antoine Fuqua and Wesley Snipes"* © 2010 Radical Publishing, Inc, Fuqua Films and Wesley Snipes

A DOOR TO A DREAM (LEFT): *"This was an image that was created for a hybrid-illustrated novel we're publishing called* Jake The Dreaming *with illustrations by Andrew Jones. Andrew Jones' stylisation was a perfect fit. This image really gives a feel for the imaginative dream world"* © 2010 Radical Publishing, Inc, Marc Bernardin and Adam Freeman

unique, lending themselves to a multitude of filmmakers. However, Levine stresses: "We aren't making books to make films, we're making great stories that can translate into different formats – films, games, any platform. Once again, the cinematic quality of our art seems to attract all creatives. Media gives the title and art a wider platform and introduces the project – whether it's a film, TV, or videogame – to a larger audience that wouldn't necessarily buy a graphic novel. Also, it gives artists the opportunity to see their art as merchandising, including toys and games, etc."

With high-profile projects lined up including October's mini series of *Abattoir* from Darren Lynn Bousman – director of the *Saw* franchise films – written by Rob Levin and Troy Peteri and 2011's scheduled release of graphic novel *Mata Hari*, by *xXx* screenwriter Rich Wilkes, Radical isn't sitting on its laurels. Then Radical Publishing has always seen compromise as immaterial, as Levine finally reveals: "I've been critical, especially of myself, since the day I became an artist. Since I was a rock-and-roll photographer, I probably liked only 20 per cent of my work. Between Jeremy and myself, we're incredibly critical of our art. Our production renderings must define what the characters and story are all about. You don't get a second chance to make a first impression in this world."

DAMAGED COVER ART: *"This is a cover that I art-directed for a project called* Damaged, *created by John and Michael Schwarz. The artist is Alex Maleev; he did a great job"* © 2010 Radical Publishing, Inc and Full Clip Productions

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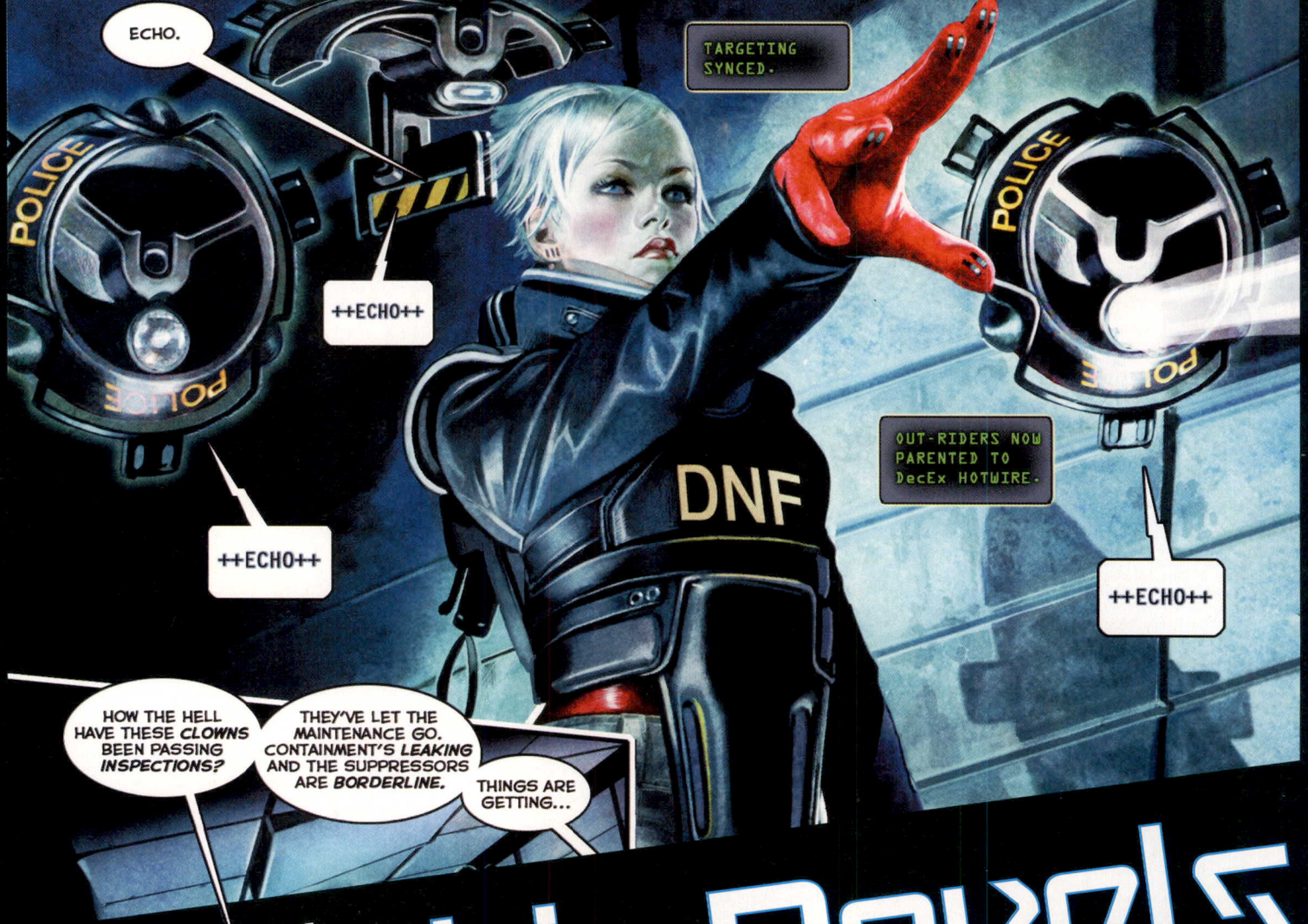


HOTWIRE © 2009-2010 RADICAL PUBLISHING INC, STEVE PUGH AND WARREN ELLIS

the art of Graphic Novels

FIND OUT HOW PHOTOSHOP IS EVOLVING THE COMIC INDUSTRY WITH INSIGHTS FROM OUR EXPERT ARTISTS

From the boom of the Thirties, through the subversive underground comix scene and popularised graphic novel period of the Seventies, to the blossoming scholarship of the Eighties, the comic industry has been in constant flux.

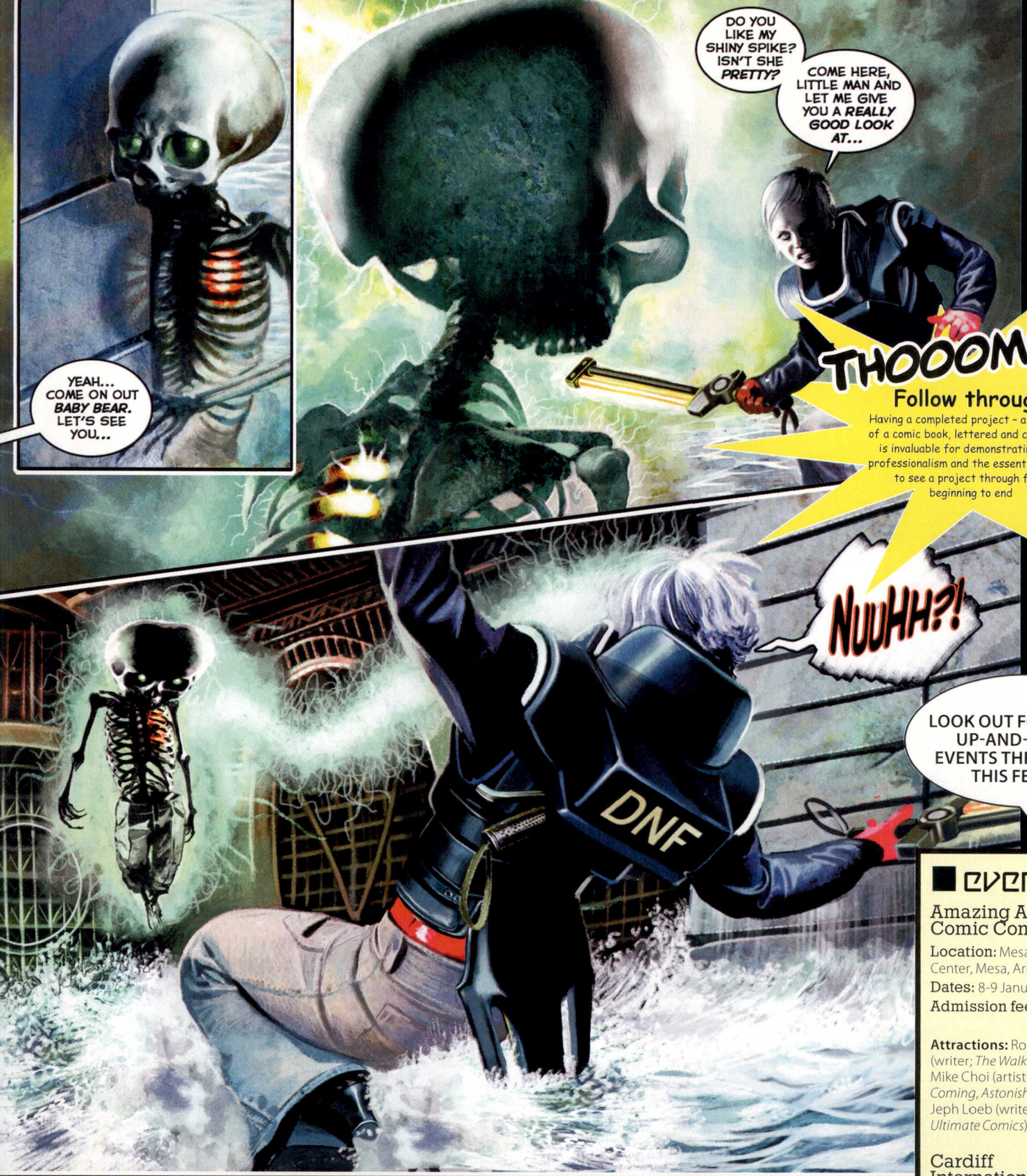
Currently, it's a case of 'with great creative power comes great responsibility'. Present professional comic artists are not only depended upon to evolve styles but also to conform to esteemed iconic characters and settings. These must be consistent at all times with how editors and art directors see these. But if editors and art directors are upholding the standards of iconography, who or what is setting the standard for applied methods?

This is what we aim to discover in this feature. With our professional artists working on a range of projects for DC Comics, Marvel and Radical Publishing, they share with us how to get a head start, and develop the right styles and attitudes that will ultimately help you to become a canny comic creator. We'll explore a catalogue of topics, such as examining modern publishing formats, matching precursory and contemporary design tools, essential industry conduct, and insider techniques and tips. This overview from ranking professionals will serve as a comprehensive guide, enabling you to evolve your own sequential art skills and mindset.

BAMF!

Observe

We tend to draw what we know, so expand what you know, building a better visual vocabulary by exploring different environments, paying attention to the ways people build things and how they entertain themselves


YEAH... COME ON OUT BABY BEAR. LET'S SEE YOU...
DO YOU LIKE MY SHINY SPIKE? ISN'T SHE PRETTY?
COME HERE, LITTLE MAN AND LET ME GIVE YOU A REALLY GOOD LOOK AT...
THOOOM!
Follow through
Having a completed project - a full issue of a comic book, lettered and coloured - is invaluable for demonstrating your professionalism and the essential ability to see a project through from beginning to end
NUUHH?!
DNF
LOOK OUT FOR VARIOUS UP-AND-COMING EVENTS THROUGHOUT THIS FEATURE

events

Amazing Arizona Comic Convention

Location: Mesa Convention Center, Mesa, Arizona, US
Dates: 8-9 January 2011
Admission fee: $25

Attractions: Robert Kirkman (writer; *The Walking Dead*), Mike Choi (artist; *X-Men: Second Coming*, *Astonishing Thor*), Jeph Loeb (writer; *Hulk*, *Ultimate Comics*)

Cardiff International Comic & Animation Expo

Location: Cardiff International, Mercure Holland House Hotel, Cardiff, Wales, UK
Dates: 26 February 2011
Admission fee: £5

Attractions: Neil Edwards (artist; *Fantastic Four*, *Avengers*), Mike Collins (artist; *Doctor Who*), Matt Savage (designer; *X-Men: First Class*, *The Dark Knight*, *Kick-Ass*)

DRAGON TATTOO: "I WANTED TO CREATE A WARM FEELING COMING FROM A STRONG LIGHT SOURCE. KEEPING CERTAIN THINGS A FLAT BLACK-AND-WHITE COLOUR CREATES A NICE CONTRAST AGAINST THE BRIGHT ONES," SAYS FRANCISCO PEREZ © FRANCISCO PEREZ, JEFF WAMESTER

Breaking into the comic industry isn't going to be easy, but luckily for artists there is a tolerance towards your skills over that of writers. To take advantage of such opportunities, there are certain things all practising artists should abide by if you want to be considered for professional commissions. Being able to convey narrative is the most fundamental skill, essentially setting apart a comic artist from a traditional illustrator. Francis Tsai (**www.teamgt.com**), freelance artist working for Marvel, Dark Horse and Top Cow Productions, elaborates: "Every good illustration tells a story, but with sequential (comic) art that narrative requirement steps up in magnitude. American comics generally run 22-25 pages, which allows an artist to convey quite a lot of story."

IF THE CAPE FITS...

Labour-intensive and extensive conceptualisation are also a given in this job, and you'll need to handle these admirably. Expect to draw costumes, objects or vehicles from a hundred different angles, tens of times, for the rest of the story. Page panel construction is at least simplified in Western formats, all reading from top left of a page to the bottom right. "In each panel, the left-hand side is happening a second or two before the right-hand side," says Steve Pugh (**www.stevepugh.com**), comic artist for DC Comics, Marvel, Dark Horse and 2000AD, and current writer and painter on *Hotwire: Requiem for the Dead* for Radical Publishing. He continues: "*Iron Man*, *Dennis the Menace*, *Dilbert*, they all work the same," but he warns, "no matter how tempting it is, don't just lay out every page making the best visual into the biggest panel. Most times you have to let the story's pacing dictate your page structure."

Francisco Perez (**www.pac23.com**), freelance illustrator and colourist, collaborating with favourites such as Sanford Greene (**www.codegreene.blogspot.com**), and appearing in titles such as *IdN Extra 02: Neo York* (**www.idnworld.com**) and *Introducing... Volume 2* (**www.vegamationpress.com**), explains in a bit more depth. "It's very similar to creating storyboards. The artist is trying to create a moving picture in the reader's mind. Everything has to be planned out in preproduction, as you have to keep in mind where the text bubbles will be placed."

So, in most cases it's no good turning up in front of an editor with hundreds of glory shots and pin-ups of comic-book characters, when trying to find work. Commissioning editors are interested in examples of story pages where they can see an artist's ability to lead a reader's eye through the action. However, don't eradicate these from your portfolio altogether. Especially when the possibility for a cover or splash page is up for grabs, a new visual hook or interesting way of portraying very well-known characters can catch the eye of those who hire. "An aptitude for faces and figure work is also essential, because if you can't draw people, comics really aren't for you," Pugh adds.

Being good at what you do is one thing, but being sincere about the speed at which you can do it makes you reliable, and this is another big selling point to prospective clients. Always make sure that you have enough time to finish whatever it is that you will be working on. As Perez admits: "Publishers look for style depending on the project, speed to get things done, technical skill and lastly availability. There are times a project needs many rounds of revisions and you'll need to be available to finish it. Once you build a good reputation with a publisher, it's easy to get steady work."

So, deadlines are going to be a bit hectic. But here is where new media is making its mark in transforming comic production as a whole. Programs like Adobe Photoshop have made comic production far more accessible, mainly in terms of artists being able to produce quantities of design that could never be achieved using traditional media. However, is it a case of quantity over quality? Certainly not, thinks Tsai: "Digital artists are increasingly able to

LEVITICUS CROSS #1, PAGE 15: "IT'S A CHALLENGE TO COLOUR PAGES THAT ARE AS DETAILED AS THESE. KEEPING BRIGHT TONES AROUND EVERY PANEL IS CRITICAL TO KEEP THE CONSISTENCY," TELLS PEREZ © HAYS ENTERTAINMENT

top 5 comics

WE CATALOGUE SOME OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL AND INSPIRING TITLES PAST AND PRESENT

A Contract With God

An early marker of the graphic novel format, produced in 1978

© Will Eisner, DC Comics

MAUS: A Survivor's Tale

Won the prestigious Pulitzer Prize Special Award in 1992

© Art Spiegelman, Apex Novelties, Pantheon Books

Watchmen

Only graphic novel to have appeared in *Time* magazine's 'ALL TIME100 Novels' list

© DC Comics

The Sandman

Described as "a comic book for intellectuals" by Norman Mailer, Pulitzer prize-winning novelist

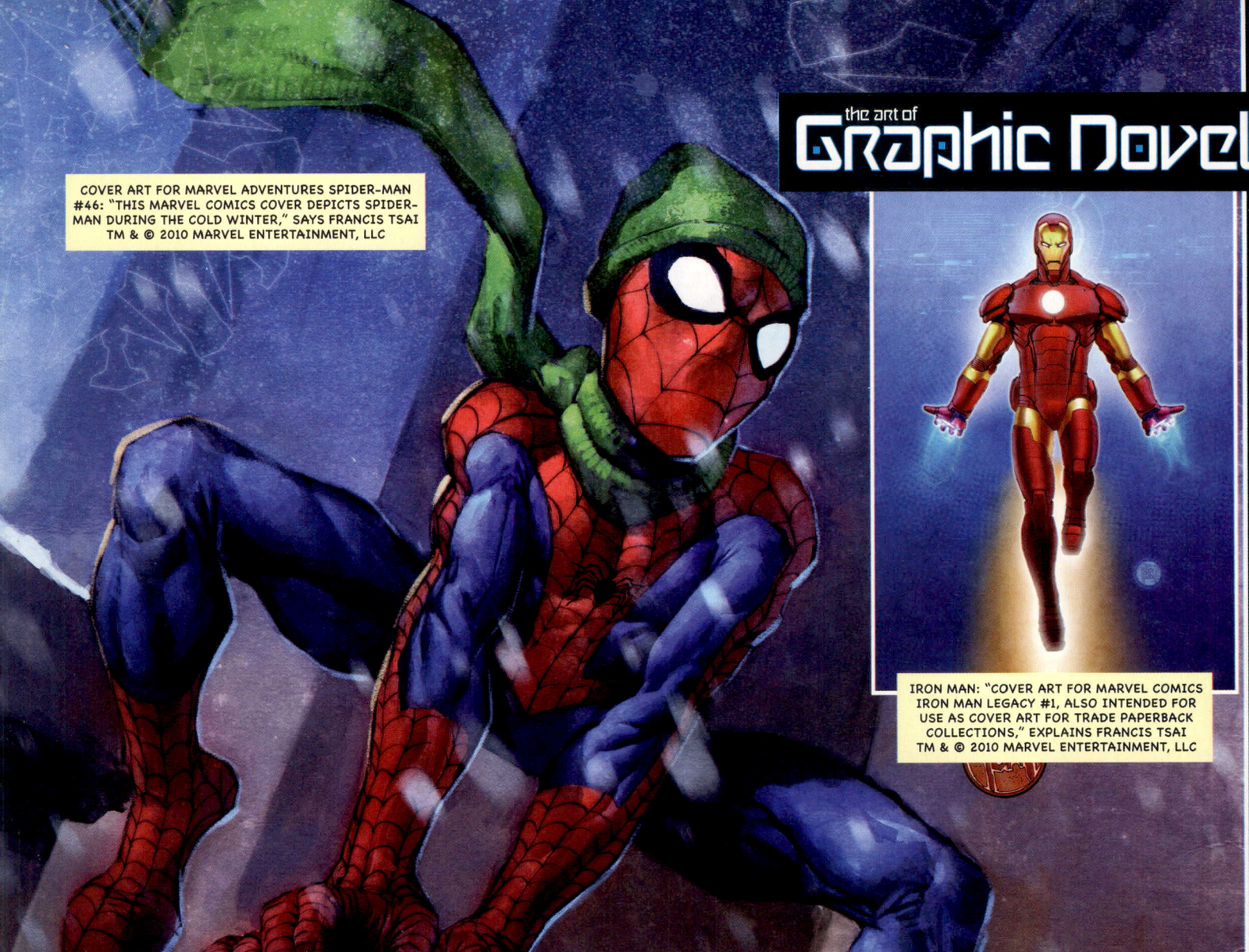
© Vertigo (DC Comics)

Marvel Zombies

The *Marvel Zombies* series has infiltrated every fabric of the brand. Surely a popular culture classic in the making, it was voted in the top ten graphic novels of 2007, by *Time* magazine's Lev Grossman

© Marvel Comics

the art of Graphic Novels



COVER ART FOR MARVEL ADVENTURES SPIDER-MAN #46: "THIS MARVEL COMICS COVER DEPICTS SPIDER-MAN DURING THE COLD WINTER," SAYS FRANCIS TSAI
TM & © 2010 MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT, LLC

IRON MAN: "COVER ART FOR MARVEL COMICS IRON MAN LEGACY #1, ALSO INTENDED FOR USE AS COVER ART FOR TRADE PAPERBACK COLLECTIONS," EXPLAINS FRANCIS TSAI
TM & © 2010 MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT, LLC

"EVERY GOOD ILLUSTRATION TELLS A STORY, BUT WITH SEQUENTIAL (COMIC) ART THAT NARRATIVE REQUIREMENT STEPS UP IN MAGNITUDE. AMERICAN COMICS GENERALLY RUN 22-25 PAGES, WHICH ALLOWS AN ARTIST TO CONVEY QUITE A LOT OF STORY"

– FRANCIS TSAI

THWAP!

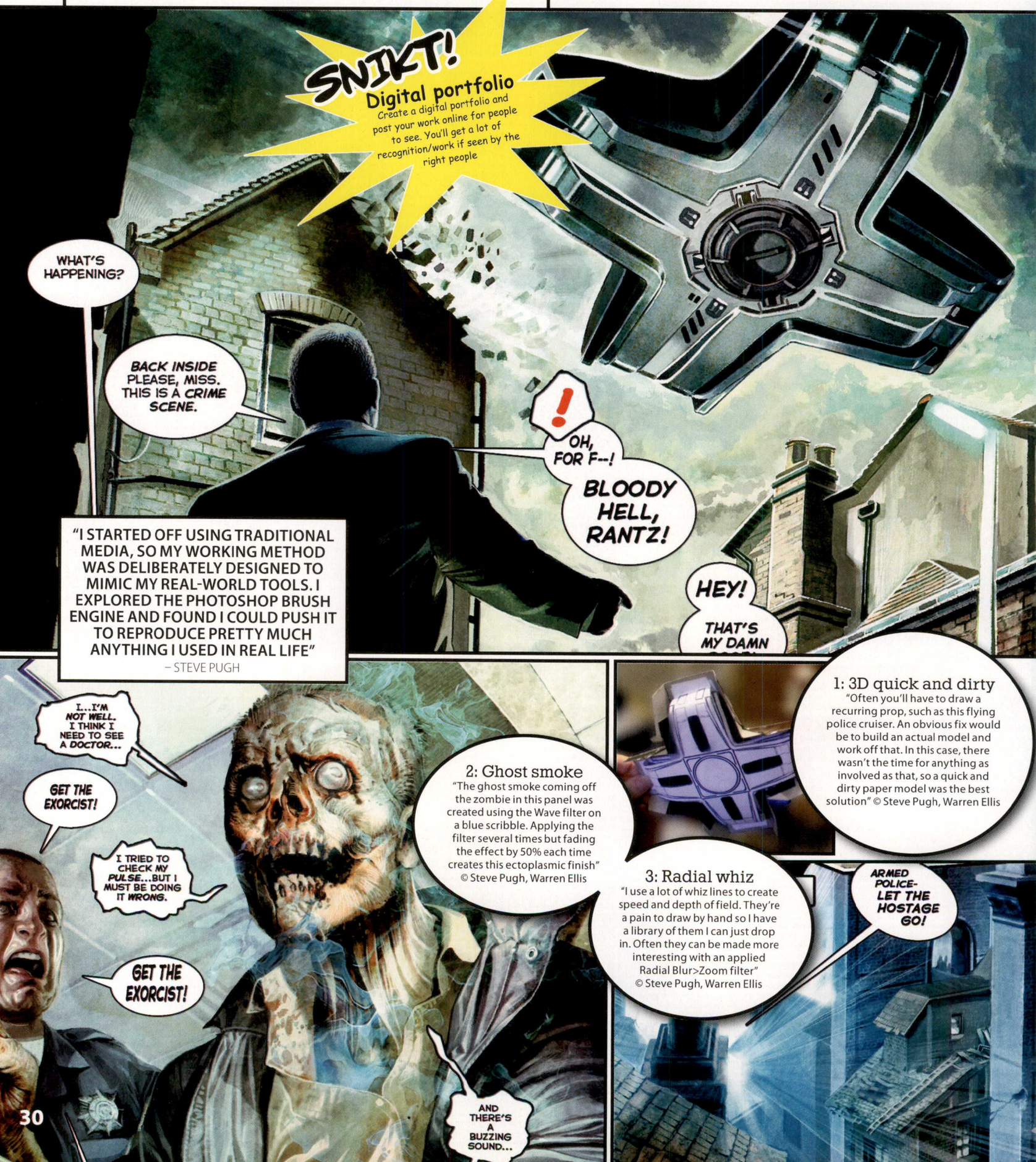
Experiment

Photoshop lets you endlessly experiment with lighting and colour, and you can fearlessly try crazy stuff out knowing that you can always retrace your steps

WOLVERINE: "COMMISSIONED BY MARVEL COMICS AS AN 'EVERGREEN' COVER FOR ONE OF ITS WOLVERINE TITLES," SAYS FRANCIS TSAI
TM & © 2010 MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT, LLC

FX from Steve Pugh

PUGH REVEALS DESIGN TIPS AND TRICKS FROM HIS HOTWIRE PROJECTS


SNIKT!
Digital portfolio
Create a digital portfolio and post your work online for people to see. You'll get a lot of recognition/work if seen by the right people
WHAT'S HAPPENING?
BACK INSIDE PLEASE, MISS. THIS IS A CRIME SCENE.
!
OH, FOR F--!
BLOODY HELL, RANTZ!
HEY!
THAT'S MY DAMN
"I STARTED OFF USING TRADITIONAL MEDIA, SO MY WORKING METHOD WAS DELIBERATELY DESIGNED TO MIMIC MY REAL-WORLD TOOLS. I EXPLORED THE PHOTOSHOP BRUSH ENGINE AND FOUND I COULD PUSH IT TO REPRODUCE PRETTY MUCH ANYTHING I USED IN REAL LIFE"
– STEVE PUGH
I...I'M NOT WELL. I THINK I NEED TO SEE A DOCTOR...
GET THE EXORCIST!
I TRIED TO CHECK MY PULSE...BUT I MUST BE DOING IT WRONG.
GET THE EXORCIST!
AND THERE'S A BUZZING SOUND...
ARMED POLICE- LET THE HOSTAGE GO!

1: 3D quick and dirty

"Often you'll have to draw a recurring prop, such as this flying police cruiser. An obvious fix would be to build an actual model and work off that. In this case, there wasn't the time for anything as involved as that, so a quick and dirty paper model was the best solution" © Steve Pugh, Warren Ellis

2: Ghost smoke

"The ghost smoke coming off the zombie in this panel was created using the Wave filter on a blue scribble. Applying the filter several times but fading the effect by 50% each time creates this ectoplasmic finish" © Steve Pugh, Warren Ellis

3: Radial whiz

"I use a lot of whiz lines to create speed and depth of field. They're a pain to draw by hand so I have a library of them I can just drop in. Often they can be made more interesting with an applied Radial Blur>Zoom filter" © Steve Pugh, Warren Ellis

bring a more traditional sensibility to their digital work through painterly brushwork, impressionistic colour choices, lost edges and other traditional techniques."

This evolution in application has seen a huge shift in the community of editors and art directors dictating project workflow. Digital art is now the norm and using digital tools is almost a non-issue, which it hasn't always been. Pugh reveals: "For the painted premium look of *Hotwire*, and Radical comics in general, Photoshop has made an enormous impact. We used to be told that you could use anything to draw a comic – crayon, pencil, biro, charcoal, etc. If it photocopies then they could print it. But now Photoshop has made using literally anything possible. Artwork that would have been inches thick with paint, and glue and craziness can be created, manipulated and FTPed, no problem. It's broadened everyone's horizons with regards to what's possible and freed up a lot of brainpower from having to worry about the practicalities."

"DIGITAL ARTISTS ARE INCREASINGLY ABLE TO BRING A MORE TRADITIONAL SENSIBILITY TO THEIR DIGITAL WORK THROUGH PAINTERLY BRUSHWORK, IMPRESSIONISTIC COLOUR CHOICES, LOST EDGES AND OTHER TECHNIQUES FROM TRADITIONAL DRAWING AND PAINTING"
– FRANCIS TSAI

THE GOLDEN AGE?

Artists like Perez have gone native and apply standard preset brush styles to colourise his and others' designs. "The airbrush setting is usually turned on for easier editing," he explains. "I use the soft brush for blending and the hard brush for more defined cuts, while the textured brushes are used when colouring something that needs a certain look, like rusted metal." Tsai takes a similar approach, yet recommends a few alternative favourites: "There are specific custom brushes I've used – for instance, Arcane Circles (**http://redheadstock.deviantart.com**) and high-tech graphics (**http://z-design.deviantart.com**) created by artists on deviantART, or bird and tree brushes I've created to help quickly populate scenes."

Then there are artists like Pugh, whose traditional experiences fuel the generation of itemised brush solutions, using advanced settings. He reveals: "I started off using traditional media, so my working method was deliberately designed to mimic my real-world tools. I explored the Photoshop brush engine and found I could push it to reproduce pretty much anything I used in real life – crayon, oils, dry brush, biro, anything really. I recommend exploring the options; default brushes are pretty basic and you can wrestle amazing things out of Photoshop, often on a par with Painter."

Many comic artists and colourists will operate with semi-transparent brushes, used to build up layered colour. Specific tones and layer blending modes fit certain criteria – eg midnight blue applied to a low percentage Linear Burn layer for producing shadows, while Overlay layers are used for producing highlights, using white to apply lighter shades of the base colour. "I love blending modes," admits Tsai. "After an initial colour pass I will often add an adjustment layer, like a Hue/Saturation layer, set at a certain colour and low opacity to tie the whole image together." Others apply Photo Filter layers to cast a colour over a scene, so that a

events

Wizard World New Anaheim Comic Con

Location: Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim, California, US
Dates: 29 April-1 May 2011
Admission fee: $25-$45

Attractions: Arthur Suydam (cover artist; *Marvel Zombies*, *Army of Darkness*, *Batman*), Jake Lloyd (actor; *Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace*), Daniel Logan (actor; *Star Wars: Episode II – Attack of the Clones*)

NOLA Comic-Con

Location: The Westin New Orleans Canal Place, New Orleans, Louisiana, US
Dates: 14-15 May 2011
Admission fee: $20-$30

Attractions: Kody Chamberlain (artist; *30 Days of Night: Bloodsucker Tales*), Victor Gischler (writer; *Frank Castle: Punisher* and *Barely Rotten Girls*)

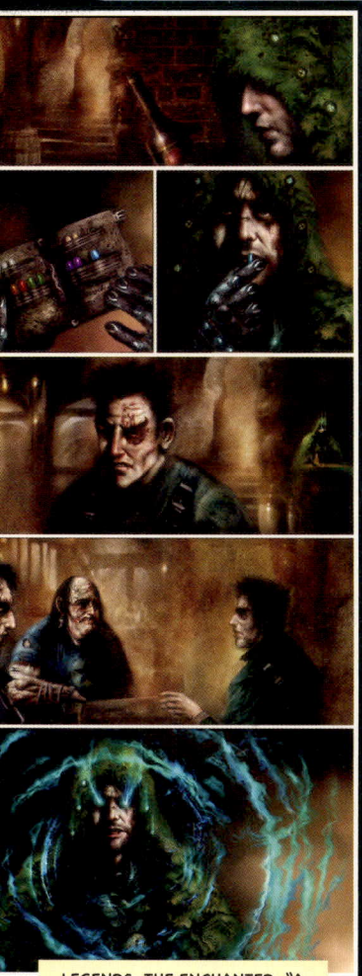
HOTWIRE DEEPCUT #2, PAGE 13: "A FIGHT SCENE WITH ONE OF THE GHOSTS. THEY PUT OUT A LOT OF BLUE LIGHT, SO THAT CASTS A TINT OVER MOST OF THE COLOURING," SAYS STEVE PUGH © 2010 RADICAL PUBLISHING INC, STEVE PUGH AND WARREN ELLIS

POW!
Real world
Use real-world objects similar to what you're illustrating to observe how light falls on them, using observation to sell the overall believability of your painting

LEVITICUS CROSS (COLOURS): "LINE ART BY HECTOR SEVILLA. A COUPLE OF PAGES OFF THE LEVITICUS CROSS COMIC BOOKS. IT WAS VERY TIME CONSUMING DUE TO THE AMOUNT OF DETAIL," SAYS PEREZ © HAYS ENTERTAINMENT

inside studio

DANGEROUSLY TALENTED COMIC ARTIST NICK PERCIVAL (**WWW.NICKPERCIVAL.COM**) REVEALS HIS OWN IMMERSIVE STUDIO EXPERIENCE



"I have tons of movie and TV soundtracks, which I play to help me focus when drawing. I need to concentrate a bit more at this stage. What I'm creating and what mood I'm after dictates what I'll listen to"
"I'm a massive fan of the old Universal Horror films and classic horror. I have loads of this memorabilia. I collect vintage film posters too"
"Tons of DVD boxsets are here. I'm constantly playing DVDs in the background when I'm painting – offering little mental breaks from intense workflow"
"The tools of the trade are pretty simple: oils, acrylics… anything I can draw and paint with. A quality scanner and a monster PC with tablet for the digital work are useful"
"Many comic studios are filled with useless crap and far too many books, comics, toys and models. Luckily, the place is only 20 yards from my house, so it's a short walk to work every morning"

LEGENDS: THE ENCHANTED: "A PAGE THAT SHOWS THE NATURE AND TECHNOLOGY THEMES THAT RUN IN LEGENDS. NICE, SOFT GREEN COLOURS MIXED WITH GREY MECHANICAL ELEMENTS," SAYS NICK PERCIVAL
© 2010 RADICAL PUBLISHING INC AND NICK PERCIVAL

LEGENDS: THE ENCHANTED 2: "I WANTED TO GO FOR A SIMPLE YET ICONIC IMAGE OF RED HOOD. FROM ONE IMAGE YOU GET A GOOD IDEA THAT THE BOOK IS GOING TO BE GRITTY AND DANGEROUS," SAYS NICK PERCIVAL
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change of location in the story is obvious. "I also paint each panel in a different group in the Layers palette, and use layer masks on this to keep everything inside the panel borders," adds Pugh.

Experimentation with varying layer styles is encouraged by all our artists and, at this point, Pugh reveals his complete working process using Photoshop, giving us an insight into the general workflow of a digital comic artist. He begins by telling us there's little difference in his approach from when working traditionally, apart from the bonus of the Undo option. He explains: "A rough layout of the page is sketched, then the panel borders are drawn on the topmost layer. I lay down a base colour to set the mood and work up the important shapes in silhouettes, often with the Lasso tool and Curves. I dab in highlights and shadows, and begin refining. If I'm finding it hard to model something, I'll use a Hue/Saturation layer, lowering Saturation to -100, to take everything down to greys so I can see the structure clearly. Unlike most artists, I complete panels one at a time, instead of working up the page as a whole. I work exclusively in RGB and convert to CMYK, flattening the art at the end using a scripted action."

So, with artists embracing digital media, what does this mean for traditional creative equipment? Have these gone the way of the dinosaurs? In Pugh's workflow it certainly seems so, succumbing to digital software seven years ago. But some still have a fondness for such devices, as Tsai explains: "I tend to use a variety of 0.5 mechanical pencils and pigment liner pens, but to be honest, I think I shop more for drawing tools based on how cool they look." Perez is slightly more practical, telling us: "I still use non-photo blue lead pencils to sketch on paper as it's easy to get rid of it once it's scanned. Mechanical pencils give you a very steady line that doesn't require sharpening. But if you want a lighter line, I

LEGENDS: THE ENCHANTED 3: "A PURE STORYTELLING PAGE. I JUST WANTED TO BE CLEAR ON WHAT IS GOING ON AS IT'S THE FIRST TIME WE SEE JACK TAKING HIS MAGIC BEANS," SAYS NICK PERCIVAL
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FZZSH!

Back up

Use screenshot apps or scripting to back up and number each time you save a PSD file. This is better than an extended History palette, as it doesn't disappear if you close Photoshop down

recommend using an H lead pencil. Light boxes are very usefully if you want to draw something very neat from a rough sketch. As far as these things go, any brand will do."

THE SILVER SCREEN

Embracing a system that generates an apt brush engine has not only changed attitudes towards application but also hierarchical structure – no longer are comic colourists perceived as 'lesser beings'. Perez suggests the responsibilities of colourists are equal to that of modern-day matte painters. "They're similar because there are times you're creating backgrounds out of nothing. Certain panels are left blank behind a character so it's up to the colourist to apply a background that's consistent to the rest of the panels. You have to have an understanding of light and colour so you'll be able to create the mood or time of day that the script describes."

However, such systems have in kind radicalised workflows for line artists, as Perez continues: "I think that there are no rules when it comes to producing comic line art nowadays. I can draw directly into Photoshop at 300-400dpi or scan a drawing made with a pencil or ink on paper. If scanned, I delete the white from the paper by selecting the greyscale channel and work underneath the line art. I use a Wacom 9 x 12" Intuos3 tablet for all my drawings. I start with a very rough sketch and then create a layer on top to trace with a finer brush. It works the same way as a light box."

Undeniably, digital media has made an unbelievable impact. Gone are the days of comic colouring in factory environments – with colour guides and cut pieces of ruby lith, laid over the line art then sent to the printer. Colour impact – always a signature of the comic genre – has also evolved, far removed from factory-standard colour increments of 25%, 50% and 100% CMYK. In the past, artists had very little control over what ended up on the page, but now what you see on the screen is pretty much what you get on the page. Also the adoption of photo stock, as accurate reference and beyond, now coupled with the replicated traditional media digital brushes, has created a heightened authenticity within projects. Thanks to digital technology, styles transgress continental boundaries as well, as editors pick from global talents. Submissions of pencils, inks, paints and lettering pages are as instant as an email.

> "NEW COMIC-BOOK STYLES HAVE NOW HELPED COMICS TRANSGRESS INTO THE FILM INDUSTRY. USING A PAINTED APPROACH ALONG WITH A VERY CINEMATIC STYLE ALLOWS READERS TO FEEL LIKE THEY ARE WATCHING A MOVIE"
> – JEREMY BERGER

But, as always with the comic industry, new styles keep it in a constant state of flux – ever evolving – as Jeremy Berger, art director at Radical Publishing (**www.radicalpublishing.com**), concludes: "New comic-book styles have now helped comics transgress into the film industry. Using a painted approach along with a cinematic style allows readers to feel like they are watching a movie. Matte painters in particular are able to take actual photographs and literally paint over them, creating extreme realism. Radical currently uses matte painters to create production art for our books.

"This process also opens doors for artists who are able to create incredible single illustrations, but have trouble with sequential panel storytelling." Radical and other publishers are reaching out to artists to discover the next generation of comic art, matching up the best painters and line artists to create ever-more dynamic styles.

events

Manchester MCM Expo

Location: Manchester Central, Manchester, Lancashire, UK
Dates: 30 July 2011
Admission fee: TBC

Attractions: Manga art competition, movie stars, TV personalities and sporting heroes, fun-packed attractions from the latest videogames to top comic artists

PLAY WITH SHAPES

Create an abstract composition using shapes from 3D renders and stock photos, blended together seamlessly

In this tutorial we will be discussing how to create a balanced abstract image. What you will not see in the following pages are all the mistakes that were made in the process of creating this work. We mention these mistakes because they are an essential part of the creation process. When someone creates an abstract image they will never get it right the first time. The process is all about trial and error so please keep that in mind as you read through these steps.

The essence of abstract art is movement – movement of your hand, your eye and every element within the artistic space. Balance within an abstract artwork is not a simple one-to-one ratio as it might be on a scale, but has more to do with finding harmony among elements which are individually vying for the viewer's attention. By allowing certain pieces more prominence over others, you guide the viewer's eye purposefully through the work without becoming lost or stifled.

Experimentation is always encouraged in Advanced Photoshop tutorials but it is advocated even more so here. There are an infinite number of harmonious combinations that can be created with the elements and techniques contained in this Masterclass so don't feel as if you are limited to just this composition. The fact that we are combining 3D render elements with 2D stock and PS techniques opens up a world of possibilities.

Our expert

Rob Shields
www.robshields.net

Based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, self-taught digital artist Rob Shields explores a wide variety of commercial and self-initiated projects.

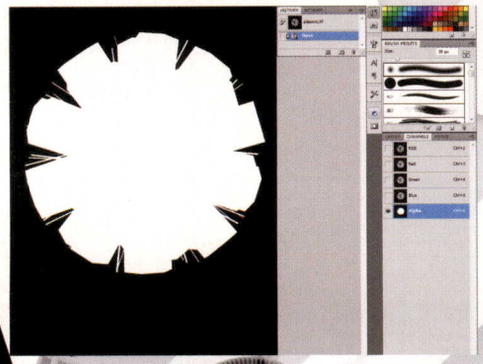
Source files

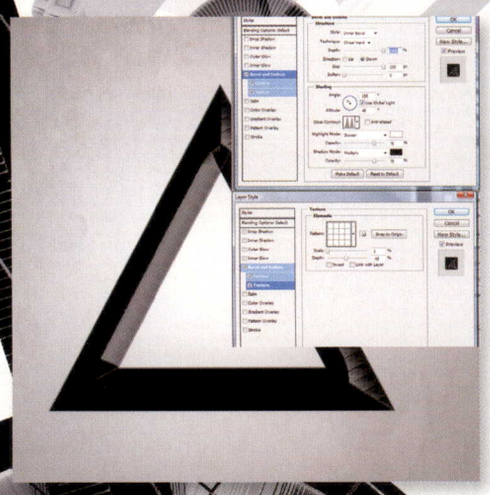
On the CD you will find eight renders we use in this tutorial. There are also three stock images and links to free SXC images that we use, plus one iStockphoto image. However, feel free to substitute your own images to create a unique composition.

> By allowing certain pieces more prominence over others, you guide the viewer's eye purposefully through the work without becoming lost

01 Using Alpha channels

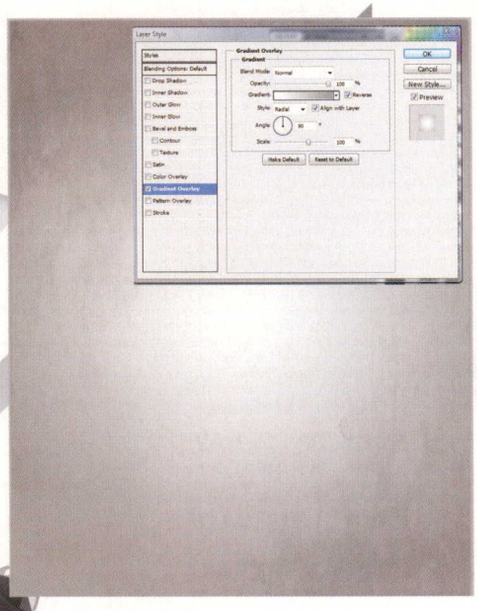
Before we begin, let's review how we can extract renders from their backgrounds using Alpha channels. Open any render from the CD. Under the Channels tab, select Alpha and deselect all the others. To extract, simply use Select>Color Range, select the black around the image, press OK and hit Cmd/Ctrl+X. You can then paste the shape into the main composition. Close this image for now and we'll start proper.





02 Getting started

Create a new document and add a white-to-grey Radial Gradient Overlay to the background image. Next, open up the 'Background Texture.jpg' file found on the CD and change the blending mode to Soft Light with an Opacity of about 50%. Now erase the centre of the texture to allow the white to show through.



03 Create the main triangle

Select the Custom Shape tool (U) that is a triangle outline and add to it the Bevel and Emboss layer style, as well as Contour and Texture. There are no set rules to follow here so experiment with values and positioning. A few hints to get an image similar to the one we have produced would be to use an Outer Bevel style in addition to Chisel Hard with a high Depth. Try creating your own Contour setting and, finally, under Texture use a Depth of -10% to -20%.

Renders

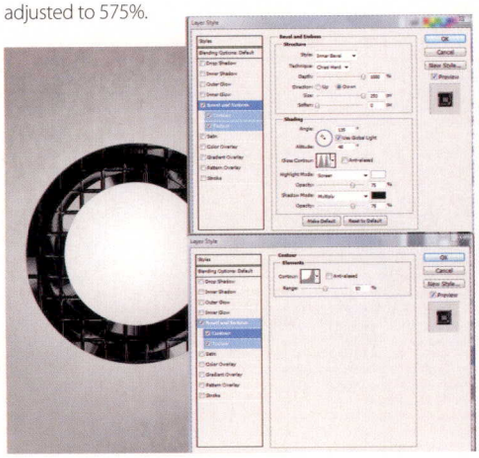
All of the renders used in this tutorial are created using CINEMA 4D. If you would like to create your own shapes, you can download a free trial version of the software from MAXON and use these simple techniques. First, find the stock 3D shapes under the blue cube icon in the top toolbar. In order to use these, simply select your object from the drop-down list and hit C to make it editable. Next press U+X and convert from Points to Polygons. Now your image is ready to really open up.

Using a combination of Extrude, Matrix Extrude, Bevel and Smooth Shift will produce some really unique results. These can be accessed by pressing M+X, T, S and Y, respectively, and then click-dragging your mouse. It is best to use incremental combinations of all these effects, but feel free to go with your own preferences.

Also explore using the Bend and Twist effects which can be found under the sixth drop-down icon. Before finishing your image, press Cmd/Ctrl+B to access Render settings. Here you can change the Output Size, dpi, File Type and add an Alpha channel (we will explain this shortly). Remember to check the system requirements on the C4D website before downloading to be sure your computer can run this powerful software.

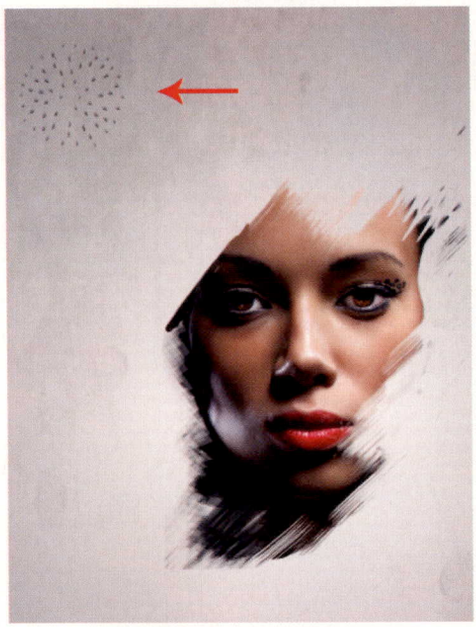
04 Create the main circle

To create the circle go through the same process as for the triangle in Step 3, but instead use the Custom Shape circle outline. A few more tips to help you along the way. This time we use a Smooth Bevel and set the Direction to Up. The Contour setting we select is the fourth standard setting and the Texture Scale has been adjusted to 575%.



05 Add the model's face

Open stock of a woman's face (see the link to the iStockphoto model we used on the disc or choose your own) and add a layer mask (Layer>Layer Mask>Reveal All). Paint black onto the layer mask to hide portions of the model's face using the fifth 3D brush found in Photoshop CS5. If you do not have CS5, simply create a custom brush with a shape similar to the one you see stamped at the top left of the screenshot.



Quick tip

When adding elements to your abstract image remember that odd numbers are always more interesting than even numbers. So if, for example, you have two particular shapes, adding a third will make the piece more dynamic. Creating a triangle in the placement of these shapes will add further harmony to the composition.

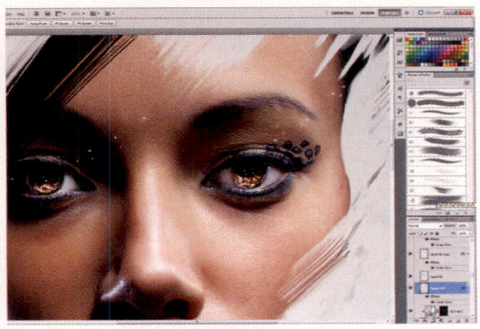
> When adding elements to your abstract image remember that odd numbers are always more interesting than even numbers

06 Paint the model's hair

Using the same brush you used in the previous step, colour grab two tones from the model's original hair. You can colour grab by pressing the Opt/Alt key when you have your brush selected. Start by painting the darker area of the hair and then move on to the lighter blue highlights.

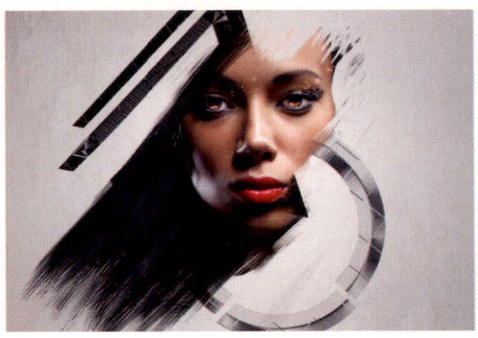
07 Highlight the eyes

The eye highlights are painted on with a round brush with Size and Opacity Jitter set to Pen Pressure in the Brush Preset menu. Follow the natural contours of the model's eyes in order to achieve a more natural result. Use Outer Glows set to Color and Linear Dodge to give your lines luminescence.



08 Basic shapes

Place the triangle and circle that we created in Steps 3 and 4. For the triangle, we slice off a portion of the left side and size it down. We also remove the lower side of the triangle entirely to add negative space. For the circle, we set the blending mode to Screen, duplicate it and set the duplicate layer to Exclusion.



09 Line up

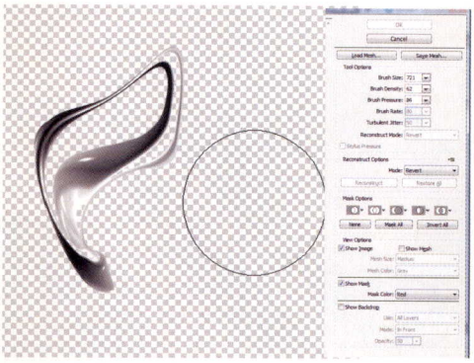
The lines you see here are made using the standard Line tool (U). Try to place these lines along planes already established by the triangle and model's face. Thicker lines are created with the Pen tool and are given the same gradient as our background. We also add black triangles to the corners at a low opacity.

10 Pyramids

The pyramids are based on two basic pyramid renders on the CD. To create the wooden texture on the pyramids, open the 'Wood Texture.jpg' file and create a clipping mask over the pyramid. Play with blending modes and levels to get varying shades. You can elongate or shrink pyramids with the Warp tool (Cmd/Ctrl+T).

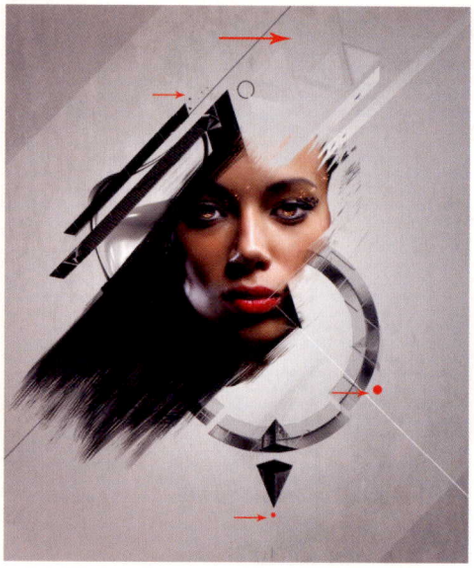
11 Liquify

The Liquify tool in Photoshop is one of the few filters that can still produce interesting results. In order to get the shape you see here, open the 'Torus.tif' shape from the CD and run it through the Liquify filter (Shift+Cmd/Ctrl+X). Select the Mirror tool (M) and take your time until the element is morphed sufficiently.



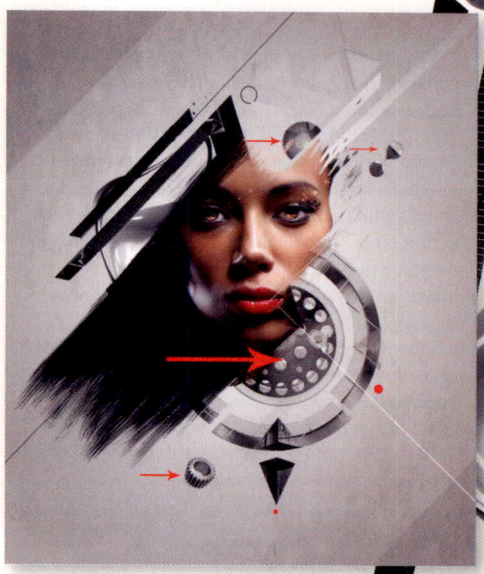
12 Add in the details

We add two red dots. The model's lips act as the third red shape and form a 'triangle'. Next we add six light grey triangles (use the Custom Shape tool) to the top of the model's head. Two of them are given a light inner shadow. Finally, we add a small circle shape and tiny triangles coming out of the large black triangle sliver for a breaking-apart effect.



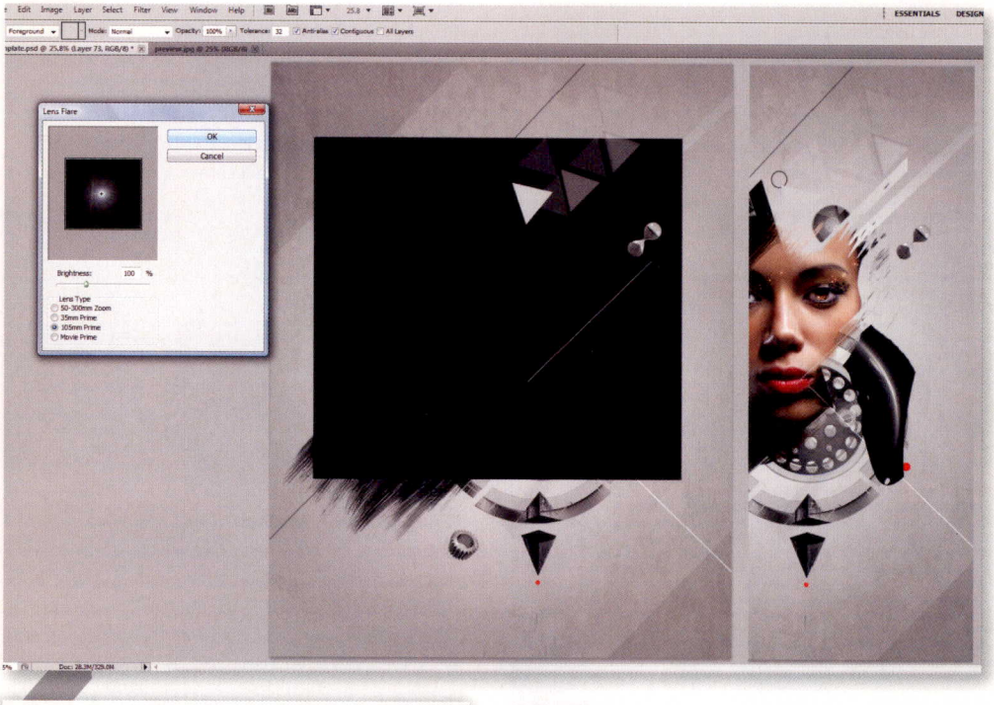
13 Stock imagery

The four shapes added here are stock photos. Some of them were gathered from free sites like **www.sxc.hu** and some were taken by the artist (see the stock images and links on the CD). The great thing about abstract art is that you can add interest to even the most mundane shapes. So get your camera out and take some pictures to make your work more unique.



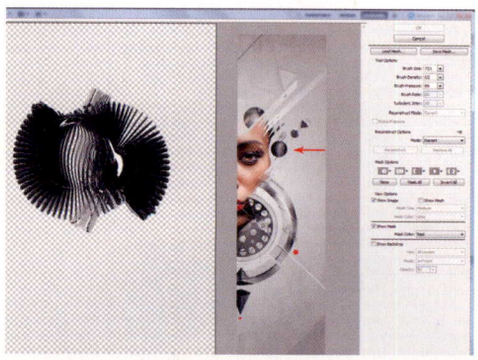
14 Lens Flare

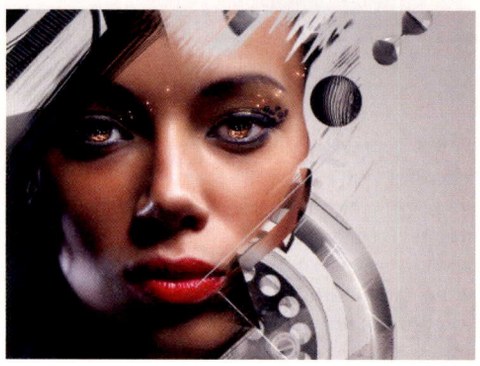
To create the white glow on the main circle we must first create a lens flare. To do this, on a new layer, use the Marquee tool (M) to create a black box. Next go to Filter>Render>Lens Flare and select 105mm Prime. Press OK, change the blending mode to Screen and use the Warp function to curve the shape.



15 More custom shapes

Every stock/render you have at your disposal can be bent, twisted and bulged into an entirely different shape. Open the 'Crazy S.tif' shape and, using the Liquify filter again, this time select the Bloat tool (B). Bubble out a portion of the image to create this new sphere. Remember there are infinite possibilities just as easy to execute as the one shown here.





Quick tip

When it comes to erasing anything within your image, layer masks are always preferable to the standard Eraser tool. These can be accessed in the Layers drop-down menu. A layer mask allows you to paint over your image so that it appears to be erased without doing any permanent damage to the image as a whole.

16 Unravel the face

This dynamic unravelling effect is achieved by using the render titled 'Open Sphere.tif' on this issue's disc. In order to make it appear that the model's face is breaking apart, we strategically place this sphere so that its right edge aligns with the model's cheekbone. We then duplicate the model stock and create a clipping mask over the unravelled sphere, erasing a bit at the end to reveal the original white colour of the sphere. You can use a small round brush to paint extra detail.

Experimentation

While many of the steps found in this tutorial are not technically difficult, the overall process requires a great deal of patience and persistence. In the process of creating this image a number of elements that do not appear in the final version were used and later abandoned. Five or six different layouts were sketched out until this final one was found.

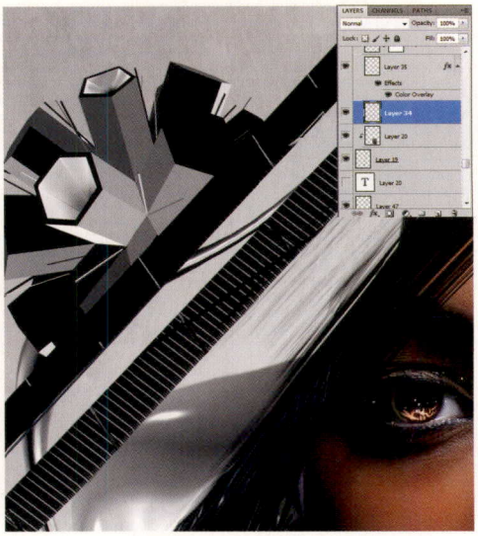
When it comes to sketching, you don't have to consider every minute detail, but having an understanding of the basic shapes can be helpful. Just remember to keep the composition 'loose', changing the original sketch if such a change is needed. Flipping the canvas and rotating the canvas while working is a great way to get a fresh perspective. This will help you notice areas that are overcrowded or underdeveloped. It is also important to take time away from your work so that you can have a better understanding of whether or not certain elements are working. Look at each element of the piece carefully and ask yourself if it is adding to the image. If it isn't, remove or replace it. Most importantly, try to be excited about the possibilities; this will make the process a lot more enjoyable.

17 More open spheres

In order to round off the unravelling effect, we will add three more open spheres to the image. The first will go in the centre of the fishing reel stock (ie SXC's 'Old reel' image). For the other two, we will use layer masks to hide all but a very small portion, which we will then place between the small circular gaps of the fishing reel. This gives the illusion of a threaded shoelace type material.

18 Platonic shapes

Open the 'Platonic.tif' render from the CD and increase its dark levels. Next chop off the bottom half of the shape and place the flat edge against the triangle sliver at the top left of the image. To create the illusion of depth we paint white into two of the hexagonal shapes and shade it using the Burn tool set to Highlights (O).



19 Fine-tuning

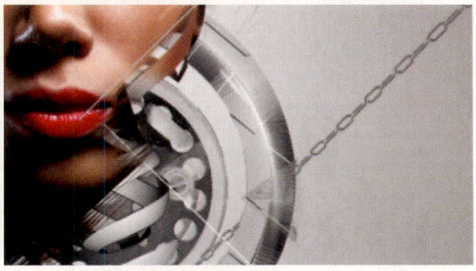
Here we use the 'Platonic.tif', 'Open Sphere.tif' and a regular sphere with a grey-to-white gradient to add some final touches to the balance of the piece. The Open Sphere is the only one we change by inverting its colours (Cmd/Ctrl+I). Even though these elements are relatively small, they help balance the image by strengthening the planes that already exist.

20 Fine-tuning 2

Now we will finish painting the model's hair. Using a hard round brush with Opacity and Size Jitter set to Pen Pressure we will paint a few flyaway hairs to give a more dynamic feeling to the model's do. While we have this brush out, we will also add some handwritten scribbles to the upper right portion of the image for better balance.

21 Shaping up nicely...

At this point the image still needs a bit of compositional balance so we add one final line using the 'Chain.tif' render, which we place into the bottom right of the image. Next we open the 'Ball23.tif' shape from the CD. We invert the image (Cmd/Ctrl+I) and then, using a layer mask, remove portions of the centre. Lastly, we position it in the upper right corner.

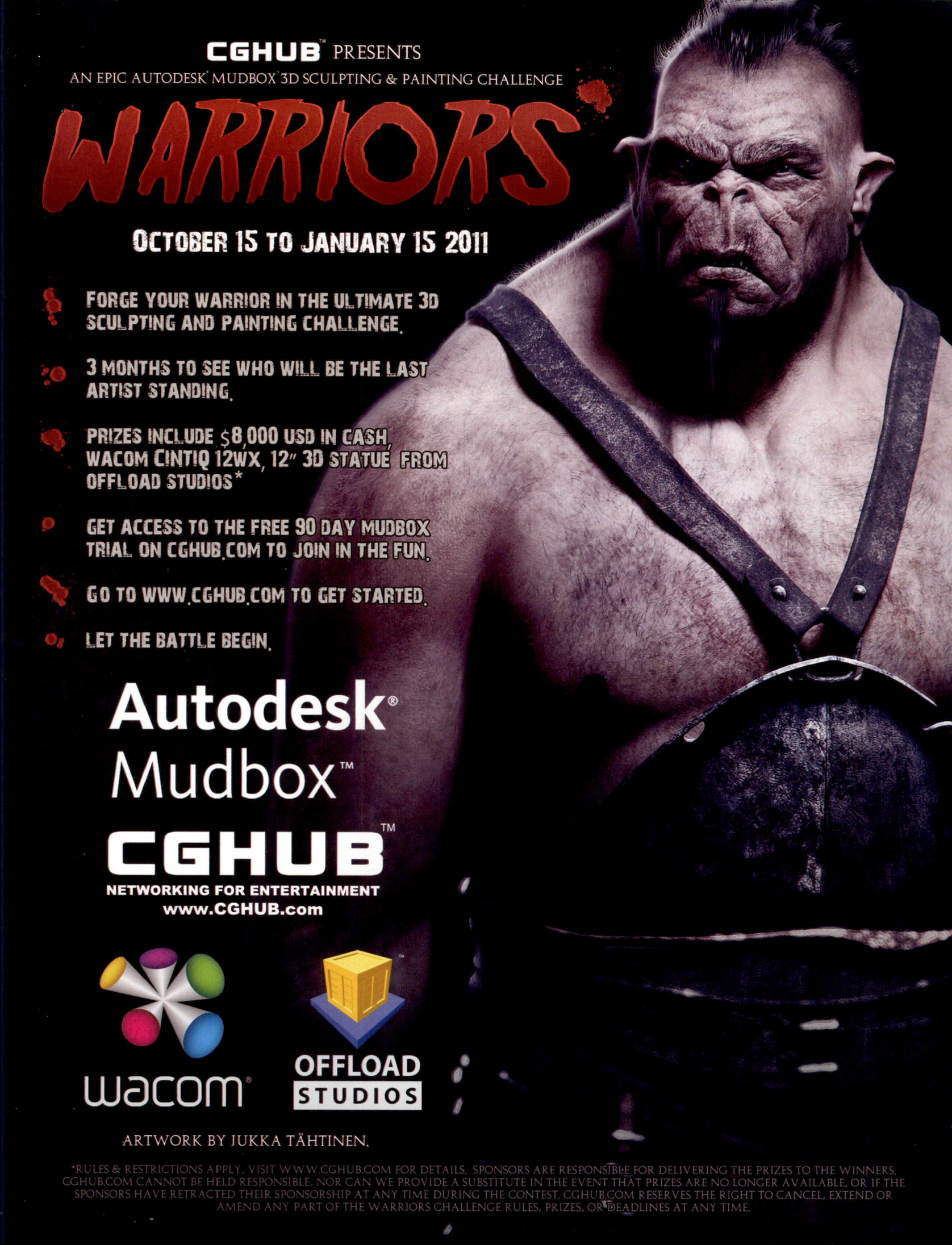


22 Darken edges

With a large soft brush, paint black all around the border of the image. Change the Opacity to 50% and the blending mode to Overlay. The screenshot shows what the image looks like just after we have painted it without changing the blending modes. The finished effect adds texture and draws the viewer's attention to the centre of the piece.

23 Final touches

To finish the image we will add a Levels layer to the entire image, upping both the dark and light levels to add more contrast to the scene. Finally, we add a purple-to-orange gradient map with the blending mode set to Hue and adjust Opacity to 50%.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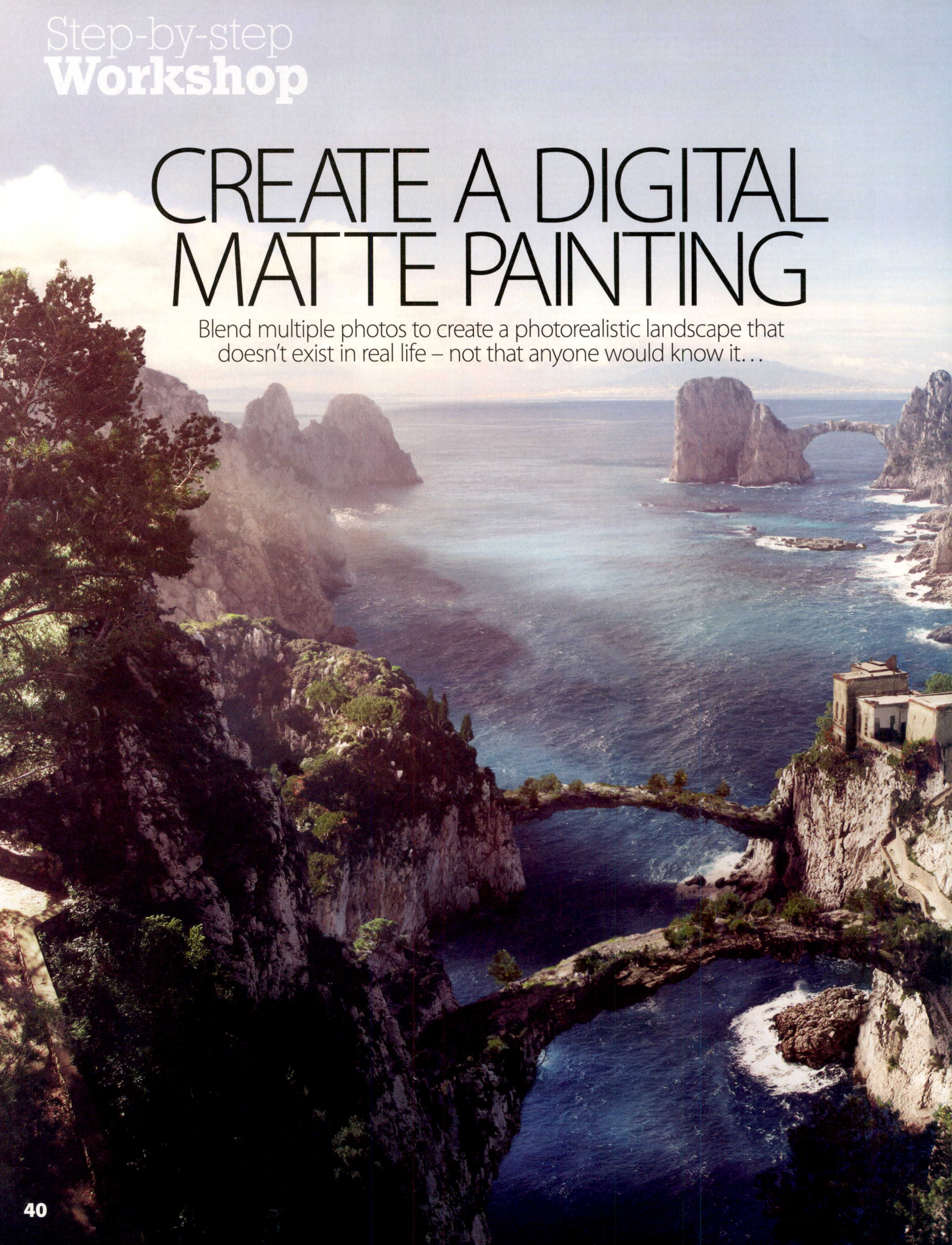
CREATE A DIGITAL MATTE PAINTING

Blend multiple photos to create a photorealistic landscape that doesn't exist in real life – not that anyone would know it…



Our expert

Alexandru Popescu
www.alexpopescu.net

Alex works in the VFX industry, specialising in film and TV work. He concentrates on digital set creation, from concept art, set extensions and 2D matte paintings to full 3D matte-painted environments.

Source files

On the CD you will find all the images that were used in the creation of this tutorial.

The aim of this tutorial is to create a digital matte painting consisting of multiple photographic elements.

We will learn how to use a large number of different images, blending them together and creating the illusion of a single photo, using only Photoshop. It will require a high attention to detail, bearing in mind that we want a photorealistic result. Although there will be some painting involved, we will be concentrating predominantly on the use of stock photos.

The final image will be a breathtaking Mediterranean coastline, based on pictures from the beautiful island of Capri, Italy. Our primary focus will be handling composition, perspective, colour and scale – the key elements of any illustration worth its salt. We will also point out the common pitfalls that come with using stock photos and, of course, how to avoid them or, if working retrospectively, fix them.

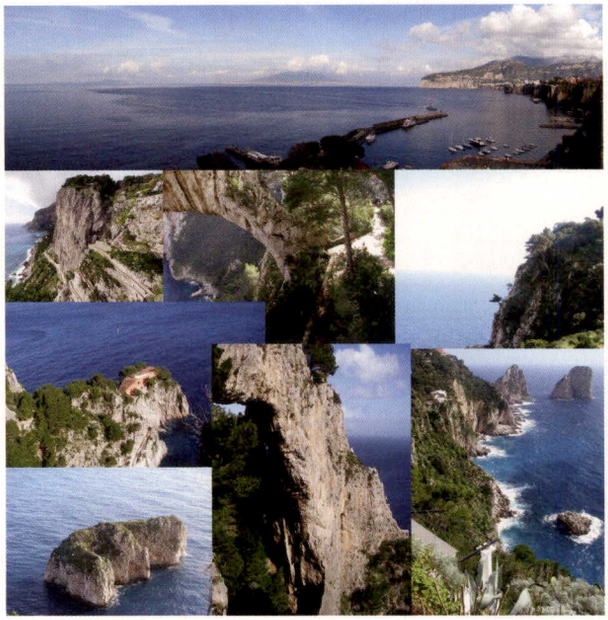
Shooting your own photos

It's always useful to create your own photo library. So whenever you're on holiday or a trip to an interesting place, take the time to shoot some snaps. Bear in mind that good stock photos should have carefully chosen exposure, with a lot of detail both in the light and shadow areas. And the most important thing: create panoramas. Take a couple of pictures of the place and then blend them together using the File>Automate>Photomerge tool in Photoshop. That way you will have ultra high-resolution pictures, with tonnes of detail at your disposal. This panorama was created using around ten images.

Step-by-step Workshop

01 Searching for an idea

When creating a landscape illustration, unless you already have a detailed brief, it's always good to browse image libraries to see if a shot really attracts you and fires up your imagination when it comes to taking it to the next level. In this case, browsing through some holiday photos from a trip to Italy conjured up the concept for this aerial coastal view.



02 Creating the sketch

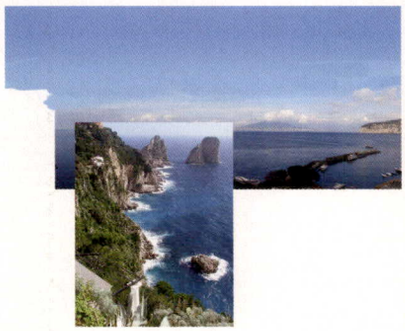
Because the purpose of the tutorial is mastering the techniques needed to use stock photos, we chose a couple of images and started playing around to find an effective composition. It's very important not to be limited to just the photographic images you're using though. Pick up the brush and sketch new elements, get your ideas on the canvas, and strive for a composition that feels right. At this point everything should be very rough and ready. We will worry about the details later.

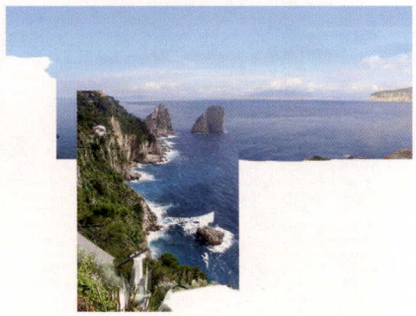
03 Creating the distant background

Once we have the sketch, we need to start working on the detailed image. To keep things organised, there must be a natural order to the layer stack, so the background should be at the bottom, middleground elements on top and so on. Because the image is very busy in the lower part, the sketch shouldn't be overly complicated. We are using a panorama of the Gulf of Napoli and a picture of the Capri coast.

04 Blending the background

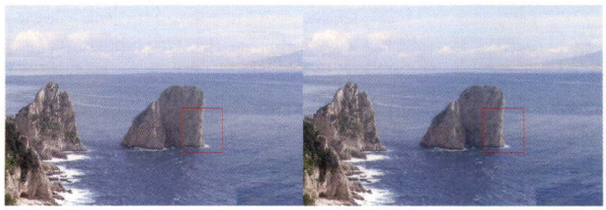
When creating landscapes by combining photos, a good way to adjust perspective is by aligning the horizon line of the images. Of course, you also need to be careful with scale and colour. So we match the size of the waves in terms of scale and adjust the colour of the sky and far background to the ones in the coastal picture by trying to apply the same values in the water. Always use layer masks and try to avoid using the Eraser to cut out elements.





05 Dealing with sharpness

Because the panorama has a very crisp resolution compared to the other image, we can see a big difference in sharpness. Using Filter>Blur>Lens Blur can remedy this; a very small value – around 4 – is more than enough. It's important when dealing with this kind of sharpness issue not to use Gaussian Blur because it creates unrealistic results. We will be repeating this step several times, so take your time with it, as although it may seem basic, it can make all the difference.



06 Building up the background

Next we add another background cliff, this time on the right. Again, it's placed by aligning the horizon and, of course, keeping in mind the direction of the sun. It is also colour corrected to match the cliffs on the opposite side, which are at the same distance. We roughly extend the water too using the Clone Stamp tool, just to fill some of the empty space.

07 Begin the middleground

The next element to bring into the scene is the right middleground cliff. The lighting is great in this photo and you can clearly see highlights and shadows. Colour correction is again needed to match the existing elements. First we apply a general correction to match the left side, and then we lift the black level and add a bit of blue to the back of the cliff for consistency.

> "When creating landscapes by combining photos, a good way to adjust perspective is by aligning the horizon line of the images. You also need to consider scale and colour"

Quick tip

When Ctrl/right-clicking on the eye to the left of the layer name, a popup menu lets you choose the layer's colour. A good colour code will help you navigate faster through PSD files with a lot of layers. For example, use cold to warm colours as you go from background to foreground.

Colour correction technique

Use adjustment layers with the Create Clipping Mask option for colour correcting. Create an adjustment layer by clicking the icon at the bottom of the Layers tab. Then by Ctrl/right-clicking on this layer, choose Create Clipping Mask; now this will affect only the layer underneath. This way you can paint inside the masks of the adjustment layers and work only on relevant parts of the image. Another benefit is that you're not altering the original file so you can make changes and refer to the original whenever you want.

08 Build up the cliffs

Next we add the left middleground cliff, using the same workflow as in previous steps. The immediate problem that emerges is that the middleground cliffs are at the same distance, but they are different scales. Always be careful of this issue when adding new elements, because it's a common problem in this kind of project. It's not very visible on the rocks, but the trees are clearly different sizes.

09 The road to success...

The scale issue can be remedied by cutting some of the trees from the left cliff and adding them to the right one. Now that we have some big trees, the eye will be fooled into thinking that the smaller trees are actually bushes. We also add the wall on the left, with those beautiful stone roads leading to our building. Roads are a great compositional tool for leading the viewer's eye through your scene.

10 Foreground cliff 1

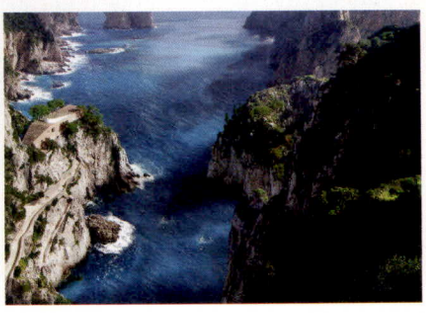
The large cliff on the left is one of the main elements in the image. It brings a lot to the overall composition, making the image interesting and giving it both perspective and depth. When adding this particular stock image, as it is a focal point, we are very careful to make the blending edge believable. Try to add vegetation on top or paint some grass on the cliff near the trees to give it a more natural feel.

11 Foreground cliff 2

The last major element to add is the right foreground cliff. This one adds a big shadow area, for the sake of balance. Other changes include another background cliff, extending the left cliff and work on the shoreline.

12 Adding shadows

By now, you should have noticed that something is very wrong in the image. We have added several cliffs, but not once added any shadows. That's because it's best to have the main shapes/objects finalised before painting any shaded areas. Notice how much shading improves the image, by making everything sit together more realistically, especially the shadow on the left cliff. This step will take some time, but it is time well spent.



13 Branching out

To help create depth in the image, it's best to use objects with the same size at different distances. For example, a big tree in the foreground, compared to those in the middleground and background will help the viewer's eye estimate distance in the scene. With this in mind, we have strategically placed some trees in the foreground.

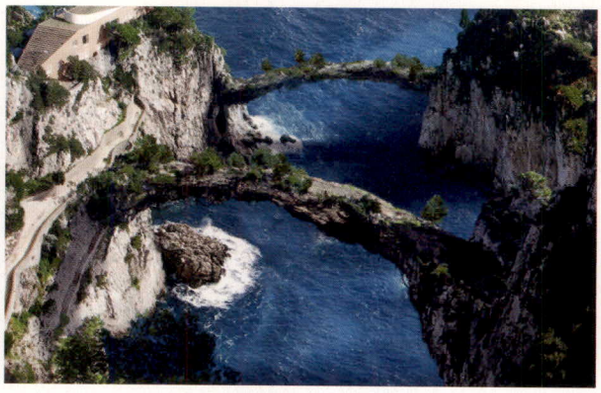
Step-by-step Workshop

14 Creating the arches

One very important aspect of our image is giving the landscape visual impact. Inspired by the natural arch that exists in Capri, we add these arches that link the left and right cliffs using the same image as the big arch in the background and a bit of clone painting. Notice that the lighting and shadows give these elements volume and integrate them smoothly into the landscape.

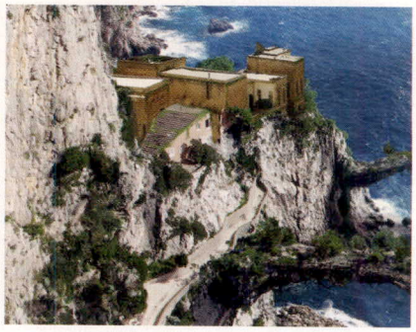
15 More vegetation

To better portray the scale of the arches, we add some trees and other bushes on top of them. When doing so, be careful with the black levels and the sharpness of the elements in order to keep the image consistent. Also take care to keep constant lighting on the trees and to add shadows on the ground according to the direction of the sunlight. Touches like this are easily overlooked, but can rapidly put an end to believability.



16 A hint of civilisation

It's always nice to add an element which brings a story to a landscape. This time, we've decided on a small group of buildings. Use the perspective of the existing house to place them correctly. Distort the image keeping the perspective lines in mind. If needed, draw a perspective grid based around that house and then match your new buildings to that.



17 Colour correcting the houses

Buildings tend to be made of materials that exist in the local vicinity, so we will colour correct them to match the cliffs. We also need to relight the image. Create a highlight colour correction layer and another for the shadows. First make the layer masks black and then start painting in the new highlights and shadows based on the direction of the sunlight.

Quick tip

To create atmospheric depth, bear in mind that blacks fade to grey the further an object is in the distance. It's a good idea to add a Black & White adjustment layer on top of your image, just to see if everything flows correctly and, if not, make the necessary adjustments.

18 Adding haze

To enhance the sense of depth, you can use haze. In this case, we want to better distinguish the foreground from the background so we add a layer of yellowish haze, as if the sun is shining through water vapour. It's good to spend some time on these little details to make the image more atmospheric.

> "Don't be afraid to make big changes even at the end; the final result is what matters most"

20 Final tweaks

During the process, you should flip the image from time to time to check everything flows. Don't do it too often, or you may end up with a very symmetrical scene. In this case, we think the flipped image works better. We also horizontally scale it to remove a section we don't like. Don't be afraid to make big changes even at the end; the final result is what matters most.

19 Setting the mood

The image is looking photoreal, but the lighting is a bit dull. So, when everything is in place, start playing with the contrast, colour balance and colour saturation, etc. You can even try adding a sun flare, though be careful not to overdo it. These adjustments can make the difference between a good image and a great image.

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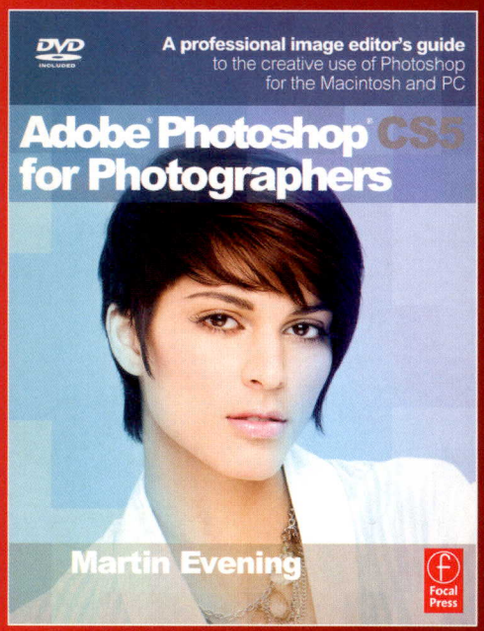

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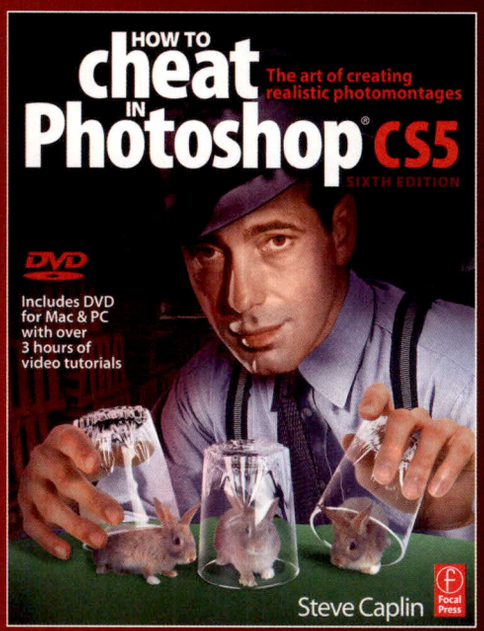

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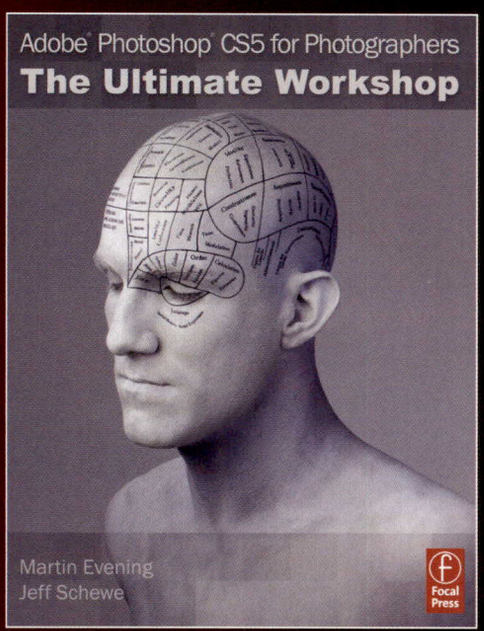

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Our expert

Tim Shelbourne
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Trained as a traditional artist, Tim Shelbourne made the switch to digital many years ago and now specialises in Photoshop and Painter. Tim is also a regular contributor to **Photoshop Creative.**

Source files

We've included the original black-and-white start image on this month's cover CD so that you can follow along from Step 1 of this tutorial.

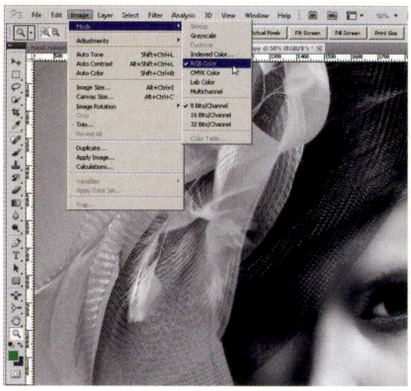
Even if an image is black and white, it doesn't mean it has to remain colourless forever. For years, when colour film wasn't available, photographers would spend many hours laboriously hand colouring black-and-white prints with a selection of transparent dyes and a brush. Now, with the help of Photoshop, we can replicate this technique, but thankfully in the digital world, it's far less time consuming and doesn't involve the use of any poisonous pigments!

In this project, we'll take a monochrome image and add super-realistic and subtle colour to it using Color Balance adjustment layers. Via these layers we can carefully mix and add colours to each tonal range which blend perfectly with the original luminosity of the black-and-white shot. To make this task even more straightforward, each adjustment layer comes complete with its own layer mask and, by painting onto this mask, we can reveal the colour only in the areas we want it. A simple opacity adjustment for these layers ensures that the final effect is both realistic and understated.

For smaller areas of colour we can simply paint some colour in, making use of a subtle blending mode which preserves all the original tonality through the added colour. So follow this project and you'll soon see that some things aren't as black and white as they might first seem…

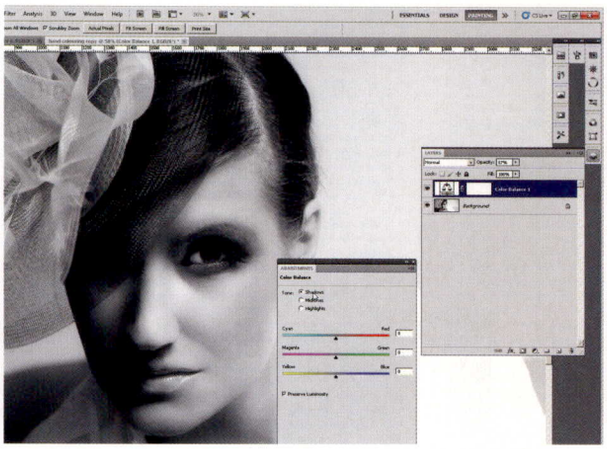
01 Get into the mode

This technique will only work on colour images, so we need to ensure the image is in RGB mode. Do this via Image>Mode>RGB Color. The adjustment layers we'll use need colour information to be available, even though you're starting with a monochrome image.



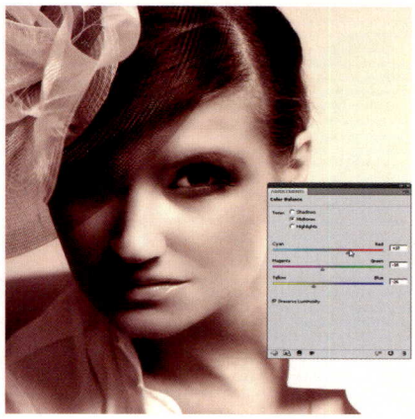
02 Color Balance range

We'll start with the skin, so go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Color Balance. You can adjust the colour for each range. Select the tonal range you're targeting from the ratio buttons and then adjust the colour sliders, making sure that Preview is checked.



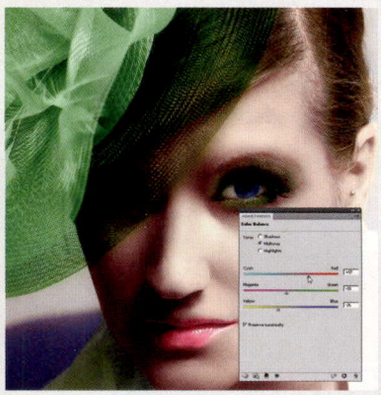
03 Skin colour

Here are the settings we've used for the skin: Shadows: +28, -13,-16; Midtones: +37, -10, -26; Highlights: +24, +6, -8. Remember, because we're using an adjustment layer here, these settings can always be tweaked later.



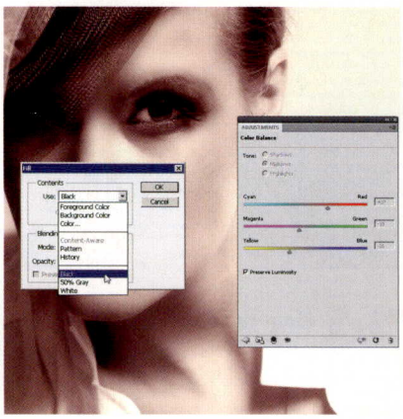
Color Balance adjustments

Within Color Balance we can adjust the colours in every tonal range. Start by choosing the tonal range you want to work with, either Shadows, Midtones, or Highlights. Each slider relates to Red, Green and Blue and their respective complementary colours, so you can 'mix' your own colours in the chosen tonal range easily. Small adjustments on these sliders can make a big difference, so go gently! It's a good idea to give the shadows a slightly cooler colour than the highlights or vice-versa to introduce a degree of colour variation. You'll find that the Midtones range often becomes the most predominant colour in the image.



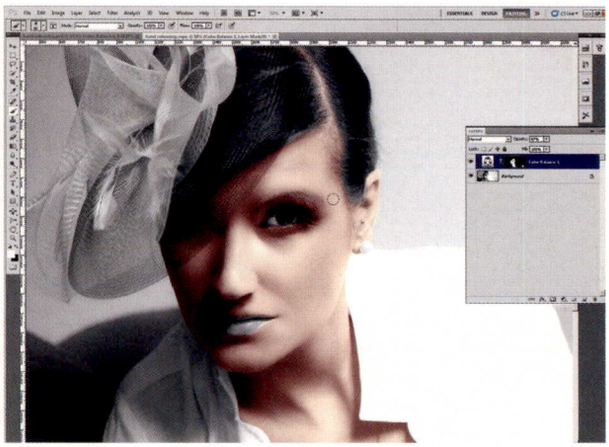
04 Fill the mask

The adjustment layer comes complete with a layer mask, which we can use to reveal the colour where we want it. Click directly on the layer mask in the Layers panel and go to Edit>Fill, choosing Black for Contents. This will completely hide the adjustment.



05 Paint to reveal

Choose the Brush tool and pick a hard round brush. Reduce the Hardness of the brush a little. Click directly on the layer mask and ensure that White is your Foreground colour. Now carefully paint over the skin areas to reveal the colour.

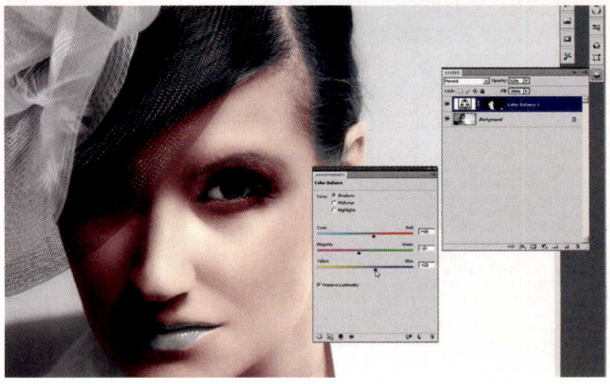


06 Correcting with black

If you paint over the edges in places, you can easily correct this by painting back into the layer mask with Black. In areas where there are soft edges, reduce the Hardness of the brush in the Brush Preset picker and lower the Opacity slider in the Options bar.

07 Tweak opacity and colour

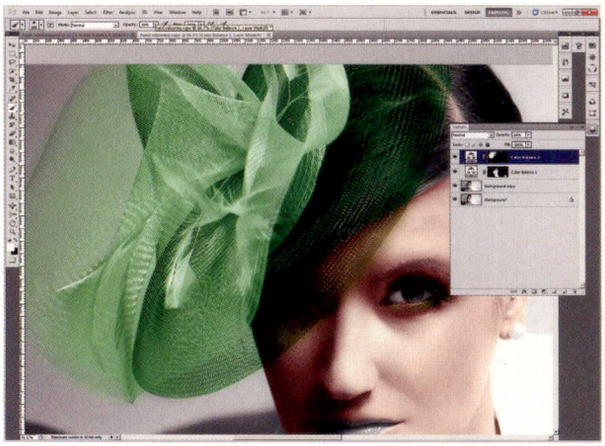
You can control the intensity of the tint simply by reducing the opacity of the adjustment layer in the Layers panel. If you want to adjust the colours, double-click the adjustment layer thumbnail. Here we've added a touch more blue to the shadows.



Step-by-step Workshop

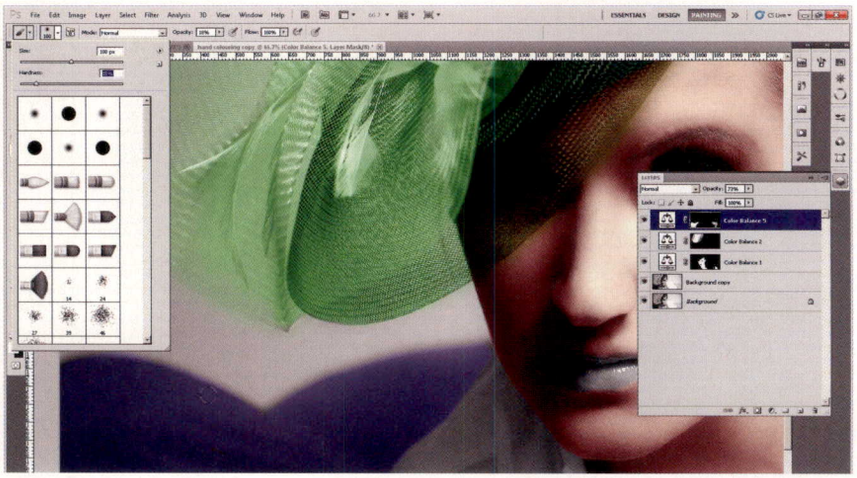
08 More colours

You can colour all of the other large areas in the image with the same method, using Color Balance adjustment layers for each one. In semi-transparent areas, such as the gauze on the hat, paint with White at partial opacity onto the layer mask to subtly reveal the colour.



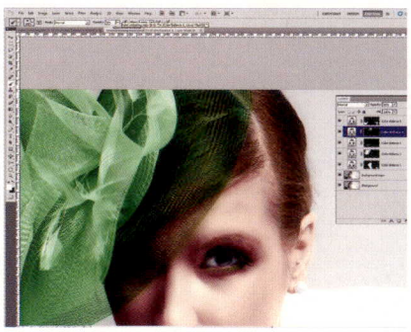
09 Accurate brushwork

The trick here is to be precise with brushwork. You also need to match the hardness of your brush to suit the sharpness or softness of the edge you're painting up to. The division between the fabric in the background and the backdrop is very soft, so you need to lower the brush hardness a lot here.



10 Subtle transitions

When you're revealing the colour from the adjustment layer over the hair where it meets the scalp, make sure to reduce your brush Opacity slider to a very low value and keep brushing over this area to create a very smooth transition between the hair and the scalp.

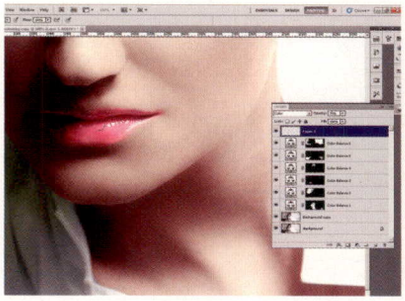


Quick tip

If your finished image has an area of colour that has an edge that seems too hard, try using the Blur tool. Click directly on the layer mask in question and use the tool with a soft brush at 100% Strength along the edge itself to soften it on the mask.

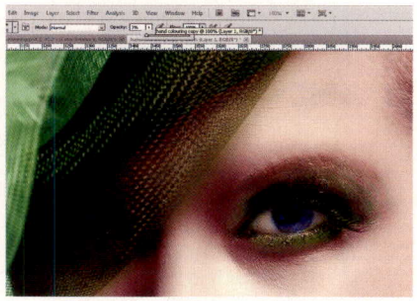
11 Paint with colour

For smaller areas, such as the lips, don't use an adjustment layer; add a new layer and set its blending mode to Color. Choose the colour for the lips from your Foreground colour swatch and paint carefully over the lips at a low opacity.



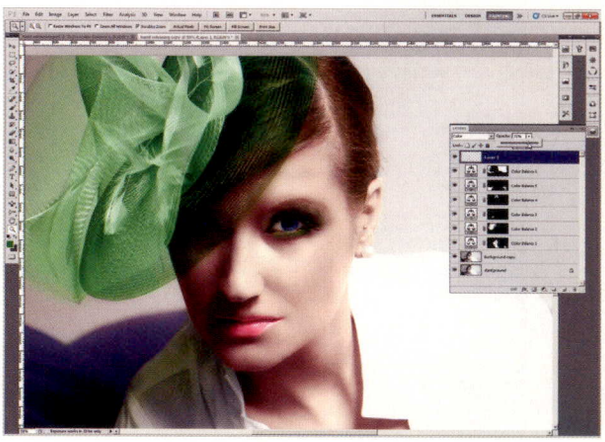
12 The eyes have it

On this same layer, you can use a very soft brush at a very low Opacity (around 3%) to add a little subtle eye make-up. Just brush carefully over this area with your chosen colour. You can do the same for the iris in her eye.



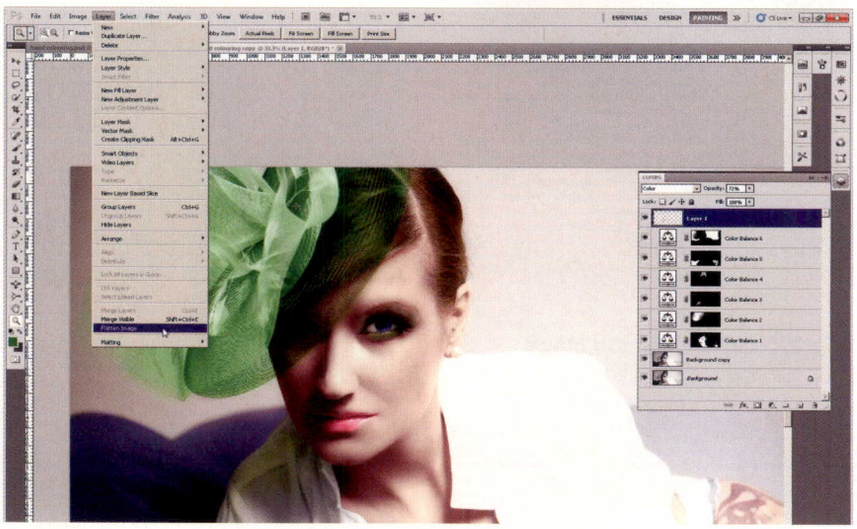
13 Subtlety is the key

You can reduce the overall opacity of this painted layer in the Layers panel to adjust the intensity of these colours. This is certainly a case where less is more, so aim for a subtle effect as opposed to a super-saturated hit of colour.



14 Final tweaks

Finally, on each of the adjustment layers carefully adjust the layer Opacity slider for the best, most convincing effect. Remember that you can adjust each of the colour layers by double-clicking the adjustment layer thumbnails in the Layers panel. Flatten the image once you're done



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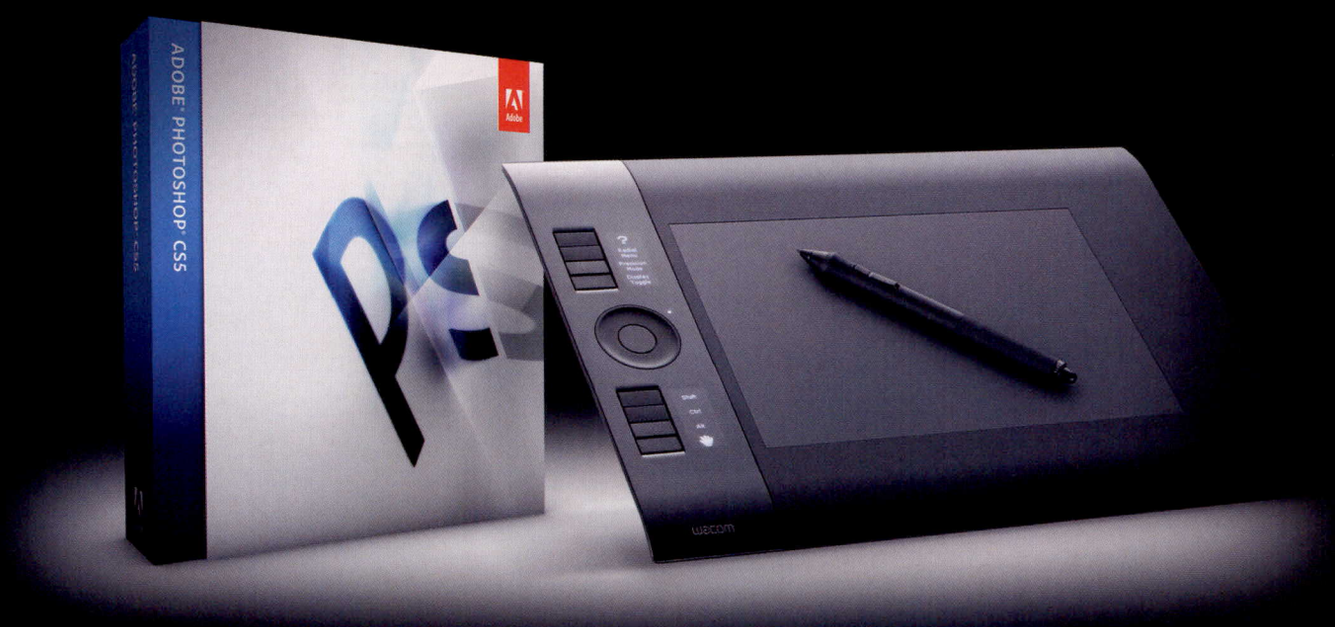

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Tomáš Müller

Website: www.temujin.cz
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With a seemingly epic style, digital artist Tomáš Müller finds it important to make an aesthetic impact within his bespoke designs. He reveals: "A special approach to each job is a fundamental way of working, at least for me. I think every image needs to be created in its own special way to push forward the maximum potential of its concept. That's why I use as many techniques as I can and try to mix them in the correct balance."

Balance becomes the operative word when discussing his commercial designs in terms of applied software. Juggling between 2D and 3D programs, Müller admits: "Besides 3D graphics, a huge part of my work is Photoshop. Very often I apply creative retouch techniques, where Photoshop is the primary tool. I can say I'm using Photoshop all the time – as either the main tool or for postproduction in later stages of my CG work."

Perhaps surprisingly – appreciating his aptitude for conceptual design – Müller started his creative life far removed from such media. "I'm originally educated in engraving and artistic work with metal," he explains. "But there are a lot of similarities between these two creative fields, mainly in regard to the high level of attention required, especially at conceptual stages."

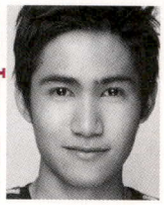
Müller decided to concentrate on his digital media style and advertising work after finishing high school. He got his first job after graduating as a designer at a small advertising agency. He has since gone on to work on internet and advertising campaigns for *BBC Focus* magazine as well as commissions for Volvo, Renault and NESCAFÉ, through agency DRAWetc. (**www.drawetc.cz**).

Step-by-step
Workshop

DYNAMIC PAINTING

Create characters with impact using just the power of Photoshop

Our expert



Bryan Marvin P Sola
www.bpsola.deviantart.com

A Multimedia Arts graduate from Asia Pacific College and is currently working as a concept, texture and 3D artist in one of the Philippines' biggest game services company, Ladyluck Digital Media.

Source files

There are no files on the CD.

In this tutorial, we're going to learn how to make a digital concept painting from scratch, which – with the help of Photoshop – really packs a punch. We're going to take advantage of the power of layer styles, filters and blending options to develop sophisticated details and contours. This workflow requires a graphics tablet, as we need to apply Pen Pressure and optimum brush settings for a better quality painting.

Over the course of the tutorial, we'll utilise lots of techniques in Photoshop such as how to check the balance of your elements, as well as their proportions, light sources and shading.

We'll also consider how to use stock imagery to create textures to produce a more complex and realistic-looking artwork. By the end of this workshop, both your mind and skills should be attuned to a more effective *and* efficient way of tackling concept art.

Top tips

Here are our essential tips for following this tutorial.

• Multiple canvases allow you to work faster since you don't need to zoom in and out of your image. Having only one canvas has a tendency to limit the scope of your work.

• Starting with a greyscale painting for your elements gives you more accurate shading results. It also saves time when choosing colour tones and intensities – especially for intricate areas.

• Flipping your canvas horizontally or vertically gives you a fresh perspective to see which parts of your work need to be fixed. This is essential for anatomy checks too.

• If you're not satisfied with the details and arrangement of your elements, don't stop. You can always skip a step, so that when you go back to it, you can more rationally view what needs to be added or changed – if anything at all!

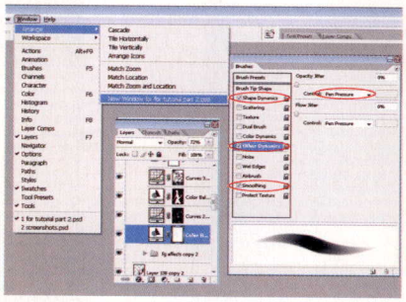
• You can use different layer styles/blending modes based on the look you want to achieve. Each blending mode has unique effects. If you can't get the look you desire, just choose the best layer style and hit the adjustment layers and mask it if necessary. This can make your elements more manageable and consistent.

• To make your main subject pop, you need to add more depth to your foregrounds, midgrounds, and backgrounds. You can do so by following this table:

FOREGROUND	MIDGROUND	BACKGROUND
- Strong and vivid colours - Usually made out of focus	- Average colours	- Pale/faded colours

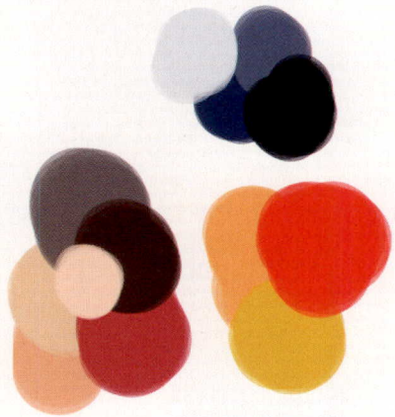
01 Document setup

Let's start by opening a new file – go to File>New and choose your preferred size. For the Brush Settings, enable the Shape Dynamics, Other Dynamics and Smoothing checkboxes, and then change the Control to Pen Pressure. To have multiple canvases, go to Window> Arrange>New Window. Having multiple canvases allows you to work faster since you can preview your image in different sizes.



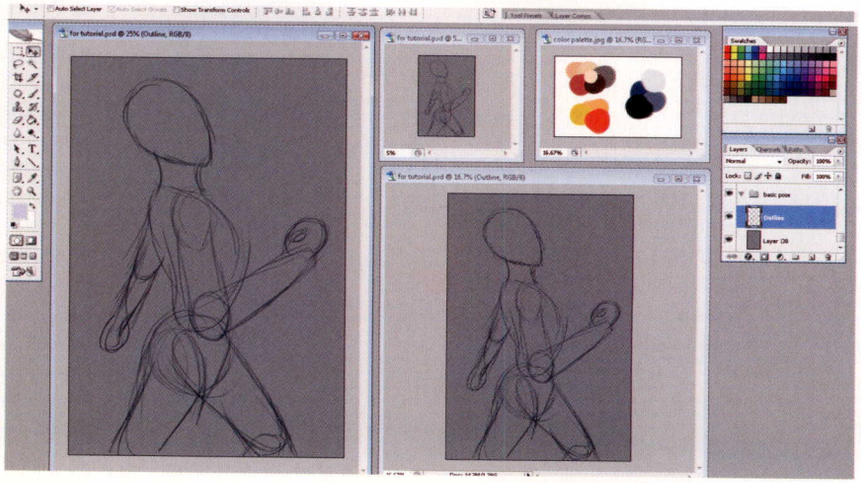
02 Colour management

Choose the initial colour scheme that you will use for colouring and painting. This will help you visualise the entire artwork for faster rendering. You can search for stock images to capture more accurate colours if desired.



03 Initial pose

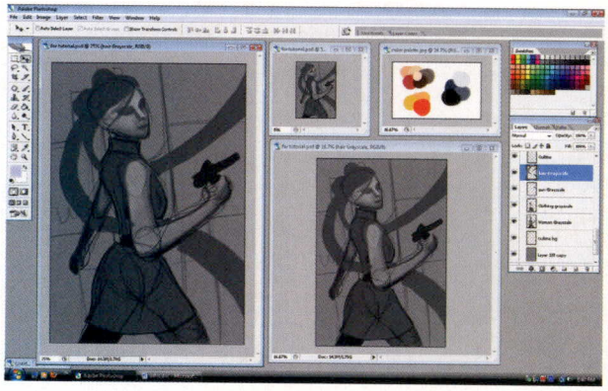
Rename an empty layer 'Outline' and start drawing the basic pose of the model. Don't be too detailed at this stage. You just have to establish the basic proportions and pose of the character. After doing the outline, create a new layer, name it 'Greyscale' and drag it under the Outline layer.



Step-by-step Workshop

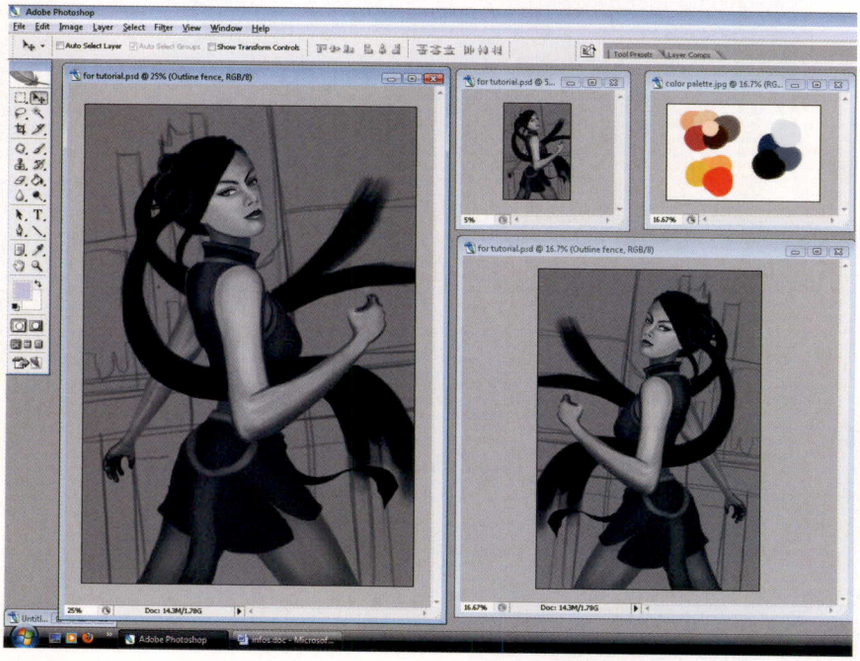
04 Greyscale painting

First, on Brush Tip Shape, turn off Shape Dynamics. Choose one of your greyscale layers and start shading your outline with black and white. If you're happy with your basic shade, you may now hide or delete your outline and start shading the basic shapes and details.



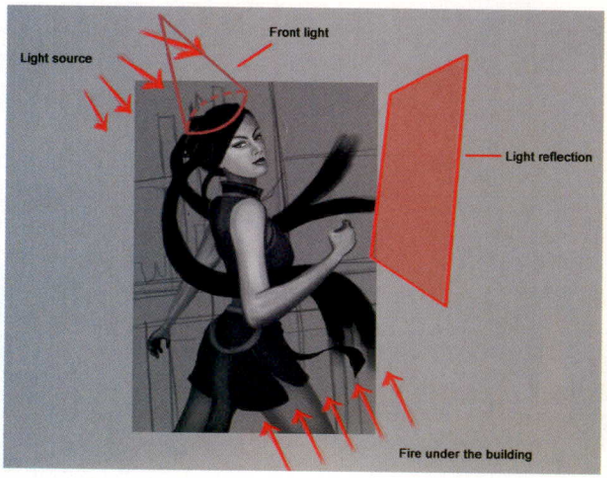
05 Image check

When you're done with the basic greyscales, you can check the proportions and other elements by flipping your canvas horizontally or vertically. Just go to Image>Rotate Canvas>Flip Canvas Horizontal/Vertical. This helps you check the balance of your artwork. Keep in mind that the balance of your image will be affected every time you add/remove something.



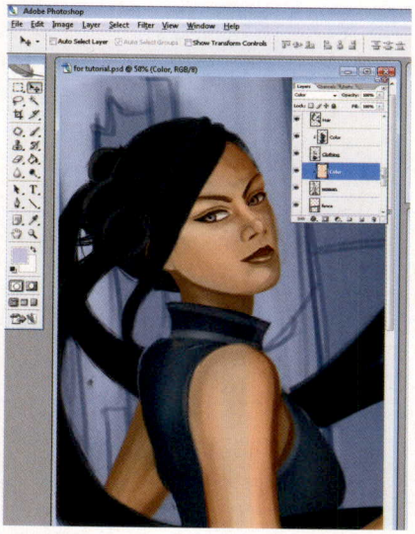
06 Choosing light directions

Before moving on to the detailed process of painting, we must establish where the light is coming from and which elements could possibly produce light/reflections. This will help you limit the painting of highlights and shadows, which will be discussed shortly.

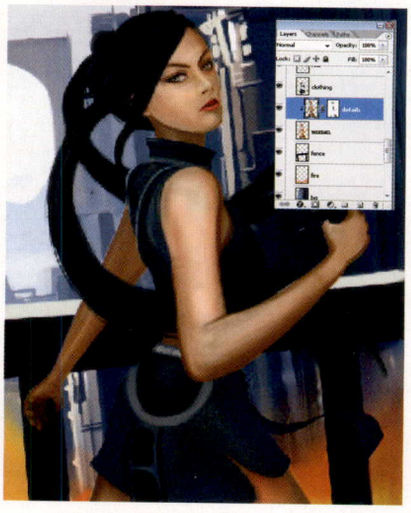


07 Basic colouring

Now let's add another layer on top of our greyscale layers, rename it 'Colour' and set its layer style to Color. Next, hold Opt/Alt and click between each Colour layer and its greyscale layer. This will limit the painting to your greyscale layers only. You can now start painting and merge it to your greyscale layers afterwards.

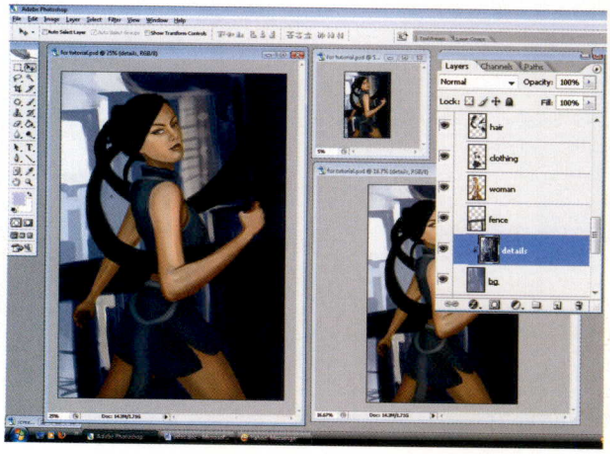


> "Before moving on to the detailed process of painting, we must establish where the light is coming from and which elements could possibly produce light"



08 The background

Apply the same procedures we did on the earlier steps for the background. But always remember that backgrounds should not be as detailed as foreground and midground elements (see Top tips).

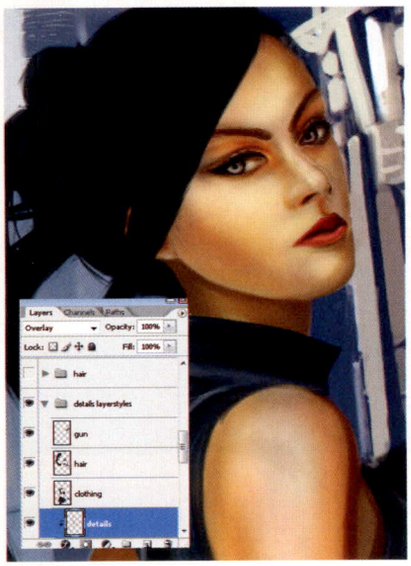


09 Further details and shading

Go back to the merged greyscale layers and rename the layer 'Woman'. Apply the same procedure to your other separate layers such as hair, clothing, etc. You can now add more details to your model, particularly for the face and hands, etc.

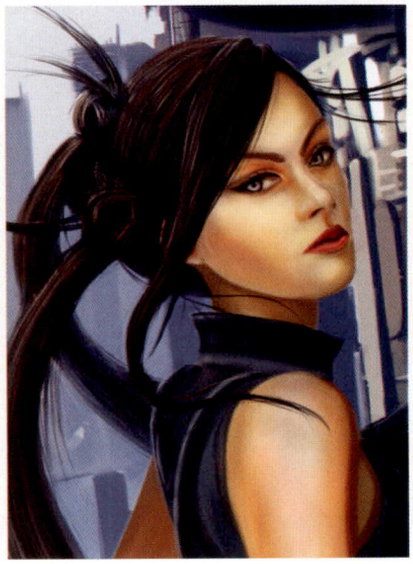
10 Shading details

You can add details and contours with the use of blending modes too. Just add a new layer on top of your Woman layer. Hold Opt/Alt and click between your layers to limit the painting. Change the blending mode to Overlay (though feel free to experiment with other modes) then start painting detail and contours.



11 Hair painting

First select the Brush tool, Ctrl/right-click then choose a hard round brush (or a customised brush if you prefer). Check Shape Dynamics, Other Dynamics and Smoothing, and change the Control to Pen Pressure and minimise the Master Diameter of your brush. Create a new layer on top of your hair layer and start painting individual hair strands.

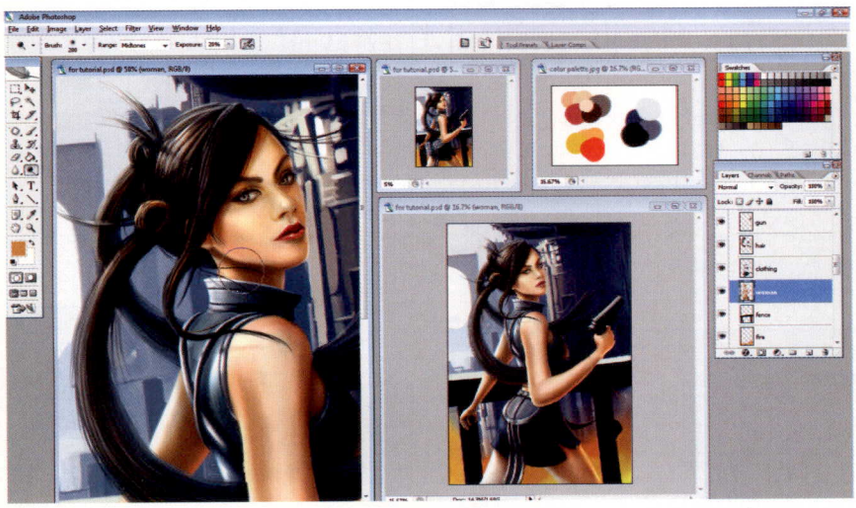


12 Highlights

Since we already have decided on our light sources, we can now pull the right gradient and colours for our elements by using the Dodge tool (press 'O'). Set the Exposure to 20% and make sure that its Range is set to Highlights. You can also apply this technique in Step 10 if you prefer.

13 Shadows

For the shadows, we can still use the Dodge tool. Just hold Opt/Alt while painting to have the highlight's opposite effect – ie the Burn tool. For the shadows in the image, set the Range to Midtones or Shadows for higher intensities. You can also apply this technique in Step 10.

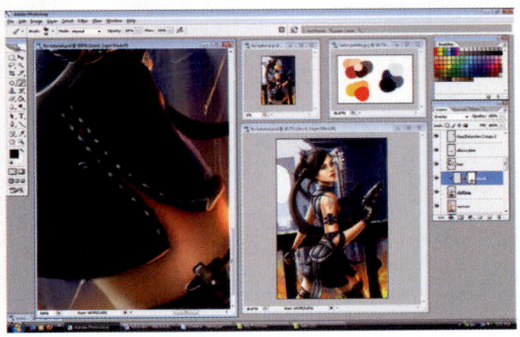


14 Keep on adding details

Our application of details is not limited to just one step. As we progress, we tend to discover more realistic, effective and appealing approaches to make our concept look better and more accurate. Don't forget to disable Shape Dynamics since this brush setting is commonly used for hair, fur and generally finer detailing.

15 Using texture images

Open a stock image in Photoshop and place it on top of your clothing layer. Hold Opt/Alt, click between your stock layer and clothing layer to limit paintings and then apply your preferred blending modes to your stock image layer. You may now create a new layer too if you want to incorporate some paintovers for additional detail/tone adjustments.



Quick tip

When painting hair in digital character paintings like this, use a small brush size to create very fine strands. This is particularly useful when it comes to adding highlights for that realistic touch.

> Don't forget to disable Shape Dynamics since this brush setting is commonly used for hair, fur and other fine details

16 Add-ons and effects

Add more details to make the image look lively and full. Remember to always use relevant blending modes, especially on metallic materials or those with caustics. Another important thing to remember is to mask all of your layers so you can adjust them at any time.

Quick tip

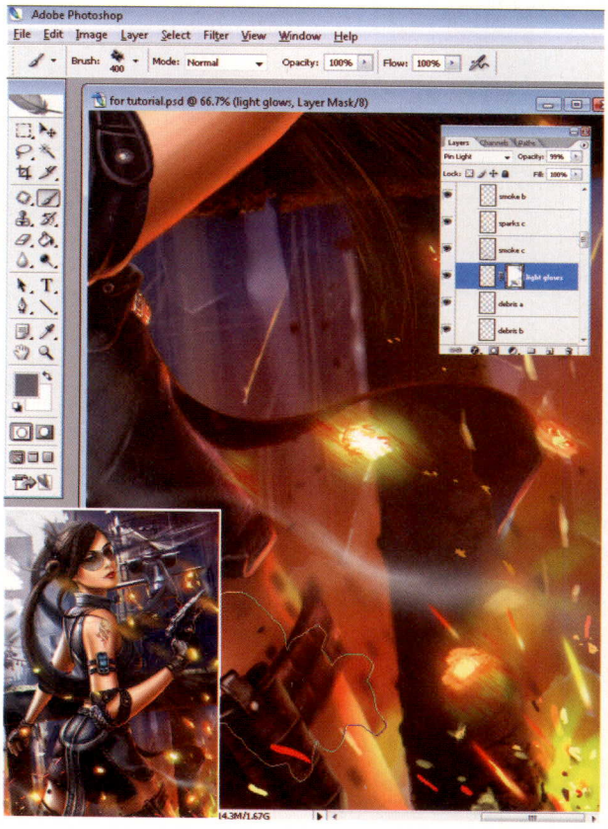
If you are not a master painter, then use photos to help you get started. You can find models with the right pose and roughly composite them into backgrounds and add extra elements. You can then keep this layer underneath your painting layers to ensure that you are working to the correct perspectives and proportions. You can also use these photos to help form your colour palette by using the Eyedropper tool to select tones.

17 Applying foreground elements

Create a separate layer for the sparks, smoke and debris, then paint over them. For the sparks, Ctrl/right-click then choose Layer>Blending Options>Outer Glow. Make it yellowish before applying some Motion Blur to it. Apply the same settings to the debris except for the glows. For the smoke, use the Smudge tool, set at 50% Strength.

18 Light glows

To add glows to the fire, choose the Brush tool, Ctrl/right-click on the canvas and choose a soft round Airbrush. Check Other Dynamics and Smoothing, and change the Control to Pen Pressure. Create a new layer and name it 'Fire Glow'. Set the blending mode to Pin Light and start painting the areas for the glows. This will give you subtle lighting effects.



> "Remember to always use blending modes, especially on metallic materials or those with caustics. Another important thing to remember is to mask all of your layers so you can non-destructively adjust them at any time"

19 Tweaks and fix-ups

Tweak areas that you want to improve. You can use Filter>Liquify or you can also try the Edit>Transform options, like Scale, Skew, Perspective, Distort, Rotate or Warp. On this one, her foreground arm was repositioned and made thinner to make her look more toned.

20 Colour adjustments

Finally, it's time to enhance the overall colour of your painting. Apply some colour adjustments until you are satisfied. In this one, we applied a fresh skin tone and a cinematic style to ramp up the drama.

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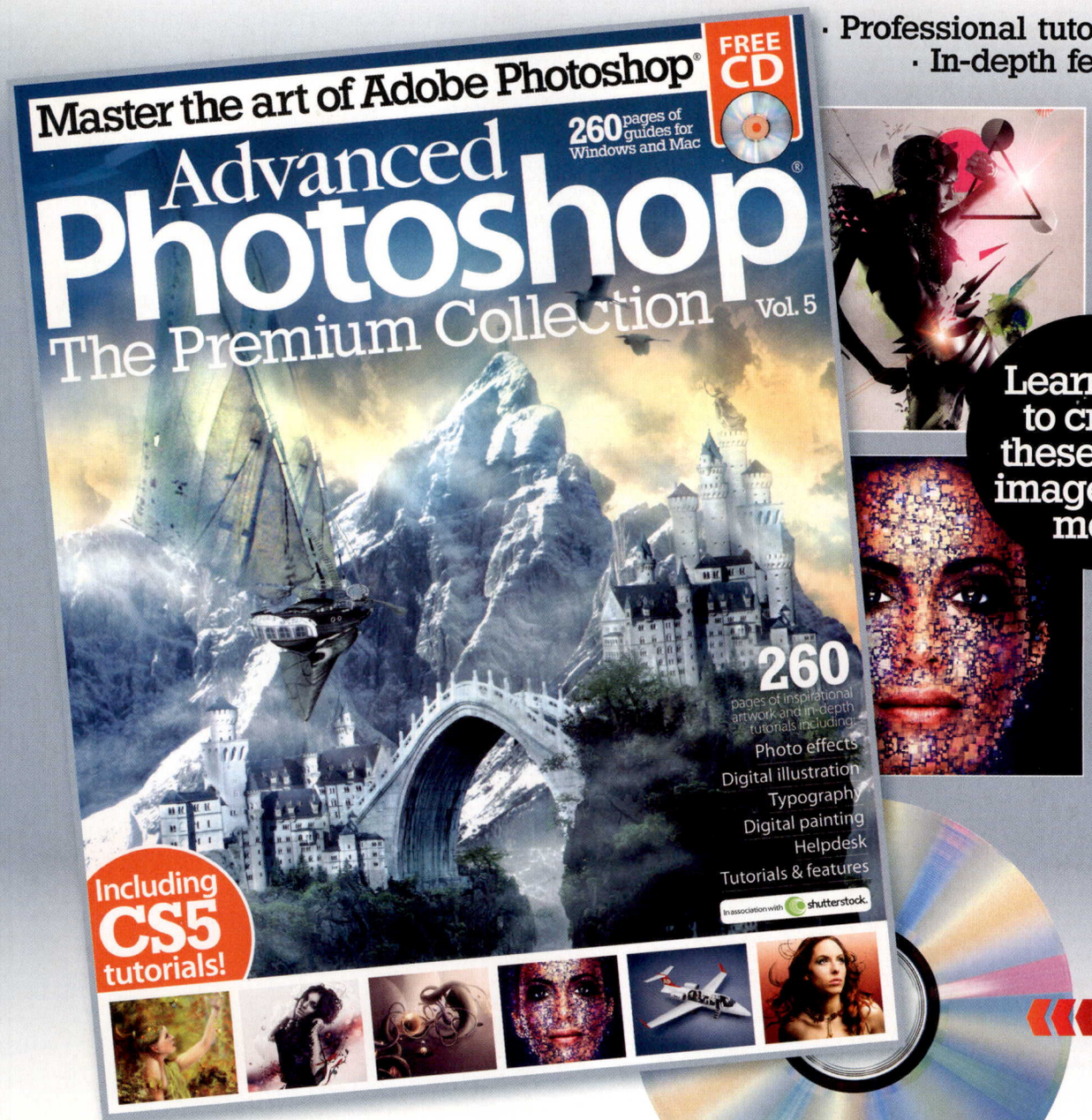

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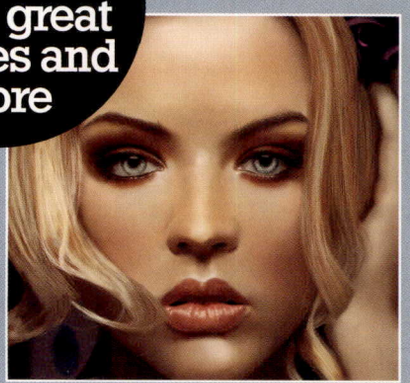

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MIXED MEDIA DIGITAL COLLAGE

FREE! Creative collage resource pack on the disc

Mix your creative processes together to create stunning digital montages with impact

Digital collage has been a popular art-form for professionals and amateurs alike for many years. It's a lively, vivid way to express your creativity and great for amalgamating spare elements or for giving commissioned work a hand-made feel.

All of the starting files are provided on this issue's disc so begin by opening these in Photoshop. We are using Photoshop CS2 in this tutorial but the techniques used can be re-created in newer versions. Of all creative programs, Photoshop offers the most freedom when producing art such as this. Layers play an integral role in this workshop and the layer effects, along with masks, make blending elements together seamless. Mixed media collages always look more complex than they really are as the same techniques and elements can be re-used throughout the artwork.

We kick off the tutorial by running through correct scanning procedures so, if you did want to start the illustration with your own resources, get your scanner warmed up. We then move on to the main bulk of this step-by-step: creating the collage in Photoshop. The main tools we'll be using are blending modes and masks – the must-know features for collage creation – as well as considering how to use layers effectively.

Our expert

Danielle Dixon

After graduating in Illustration, Dani has been working in the publishing industry sampling many digital drawing programs. Photoshop is still her favourite for the high degree of creativity it offers artists.

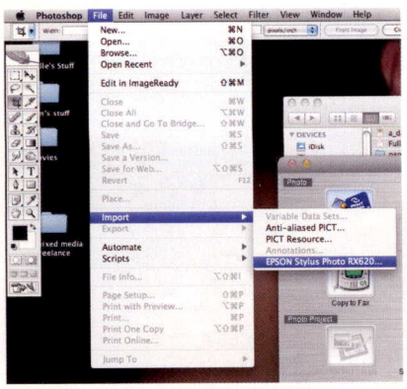
Source files

There is a whole stack of files on this month's free disc ranging from hand-drawn flowers to paint splatters and ripped paper – in fact, everything you need to re-create this illustration.

> "Layers play an integral role in this workshop and the layer effects, along with masks, make blending elements together seamless"

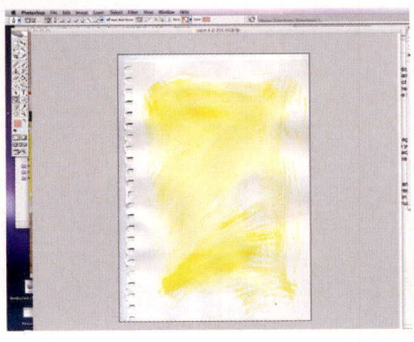
01 Set up your scanner

Switch on your scanner and open Photoshop. Go to File>Import and select your scanner from the list. If your scanner doesn't appear here then find your scanner program in Applications and open from there instead. Opening the scan software will show an option box; these options will differ between models but the basics are the same.



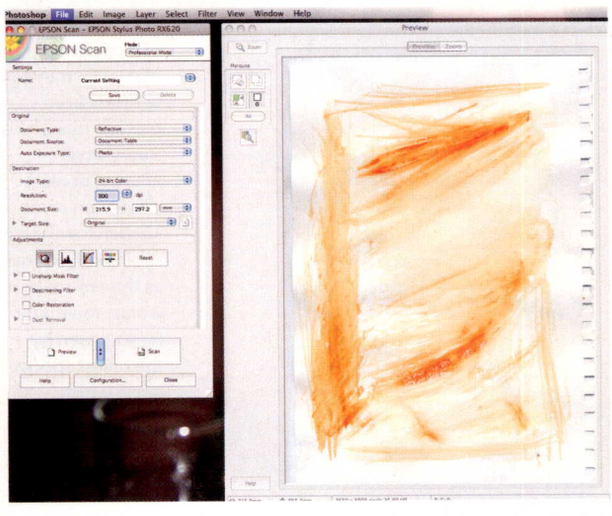
02 High resolution

Set the resolution to 300dpi or above; using a lower dpi will result in the scanned image being too small to use. In collage work, you want massive starting images so that you can resize and crop however you wish. Keep scanning in textures and drawings over time as creating your own personal artwork library will save you a lot of effort when it comes to future projects.



03 Preview

In your scanner menu there will be a preview option. Always preview before actually scanning your image, as this way you will know if your document settings are correct (eg we used the photograph option for paint splats). On a less technical note, you can also check if the placement on the scanner bed is accurate. Once happy with the settings and positioning scan the item and the image will open in Photoshop.



04 Save your art

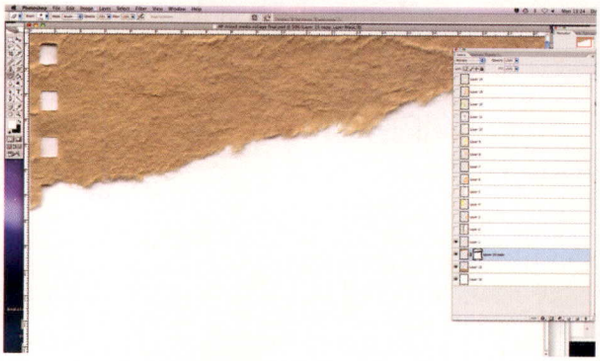
Save all of your images with related titles, eg 'Green smudge'. This way you can scan through your artwork library and pick pieces precisely and quickly. Create a new canvas in Photoshop; we are working on the dimensions 23 x 30cm. Now open the images from the disc, some of your own or a combination of the two

05 Drag and drop

Drag all of your opened scans into your new canvas. When they're all there make them invisible (press the eye icons in the Layers palette). Position the ripped paper pieces and make sure the flowers are visible. We'll start off with the main structure of the piece, as finalising this will help us build the composition around it.

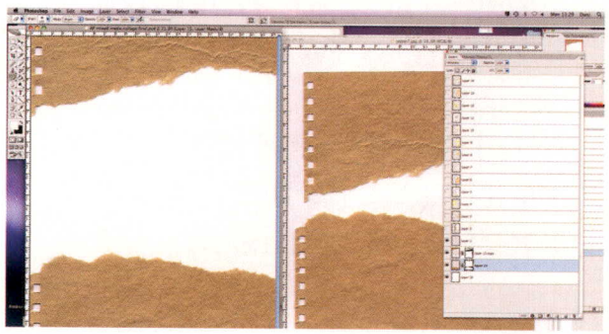
06 Mask away unwanted areas

Make the flowers invisible for now and select the top ripped paper piece in the layer stack. Add a mask (found at the base of the Layers palette) and make sure the colours in your toolbar are set to Foreground: Black and Background: White. Pick a large hard-edged brush at 100% Opacity and erase the unwanted white area of this layer.



07 Masks continued

Decrease the brush size and Opacity to 30% as you work along the ripped paper line. If you want to repair some of the mask, simply switch the Foreground/Background colours to White/Black. Using masks to hide unwanted areas is a key mixed media technique. By using masks nothing is permanently erased. You can precisely cut around items with the Pen tool and delete onto a mask or use the Brush or Lasso tools.

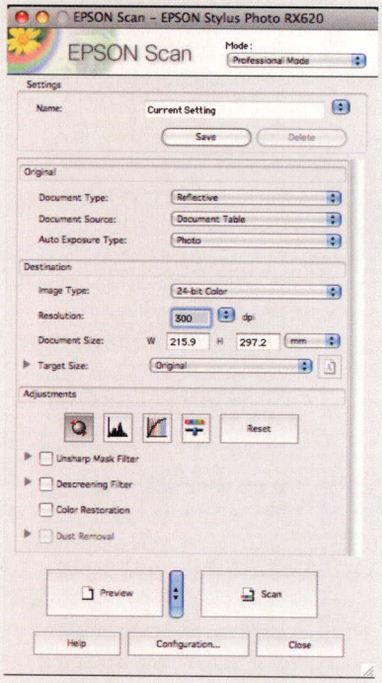


08 Flowers

Make the main flower visible and position it where you want it. Select the Lasso tool and make a loose selection around the flower. Add a mask to the flower layer and the unwanted white background will disappear. If the wrong part of the selection vanishes, press Cmd/Ctrl+I to invert the mask. Repeat this process for the other lily.

Scan options

Scanning option menus will vary between makes and models but all offer roughly the same functions. You will be able to select the type of document you are scanning, the content of what you are scanning and a range of colour options. Play around with these settings as, when scanning hand-drawn and household items, the effects can need tweaking. The flower example here worked best when scanned in as a document. As a photo, the colours were more washed out and some of the hand-drawn marks lost.



09 Pen tool shapes

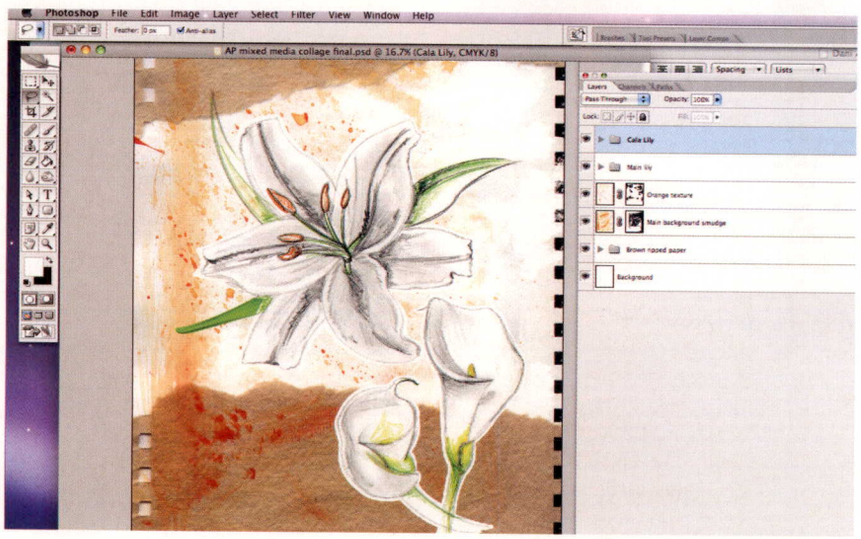
Select the Pen tool set to Shape layers and the colour white. Draw around the main flower leaving a few millimetres excess so the flower sits on a white cut-out shape. Don't be too neat as we're looking to achieve a hand-drawn effect. When finished, Shift-click this shape layer and the flower layer in the Layers palette and hit Cmd/Ctrl+G to group. Repeat for the other flower.

Quick tip

Make sure you clean off the glass in the scanner before starting this work. If you are scanning a lot of mixed media elements, transfer will pass from piece to piece. Use a very small amount of glass cleaner on some kitchen towel and avoid fluffy fabrics as this will make it worse. You might be surprised by the tiniest specks/fibres which scanners can pick up.

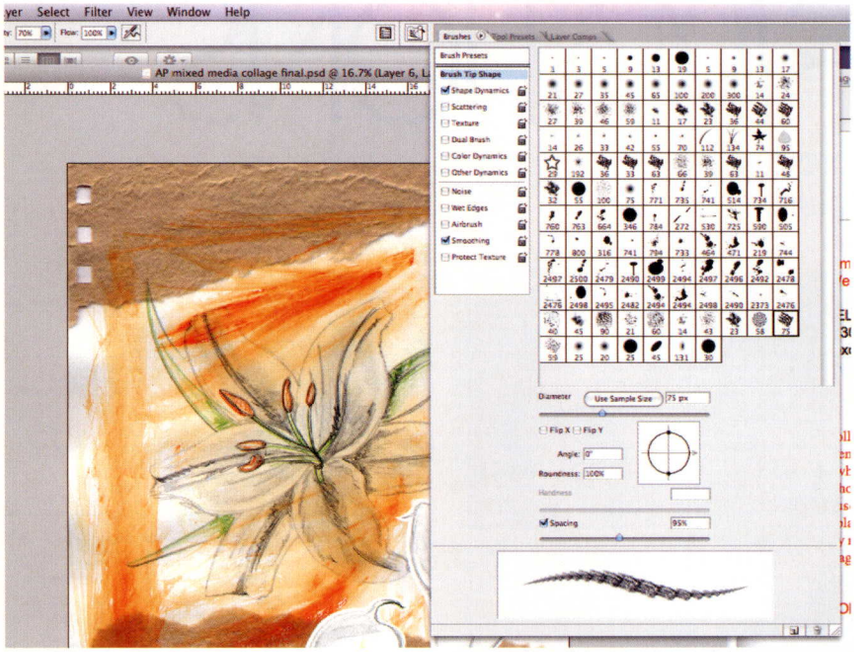
10 Add the colour

Feel free to add whatever textures you desire, but if you're following this tutorial, switch on the 'Main background smudge' already dropped into your canvas. Set the blending mode to Multiply and lower its Opacity to 65%. Next make the 'Orange texture' layer visible, setting it to Multiply, 100% Opacity.


Photoshop File Edit Image Layer Select Filter View Window Help
AP mixed media collage final.psd @ 16.7% (Cala Lily, CMYK/8)
Cala Lily
Main lily
Orange texture
Main background smudge
Brown raised paper
Background

11 Creative mask painting

Some of the orange backgrounds are a bit heavy in places so we want to mask these off, but set your brush up so it replicates the original brush marks. Add a mask to the layer, select the Brush tool at 70% Opacity and bring up the Brushes menu. Under Brush Tip Shape select an oil pastel brush and increase the brush's Spacing for greater texture.

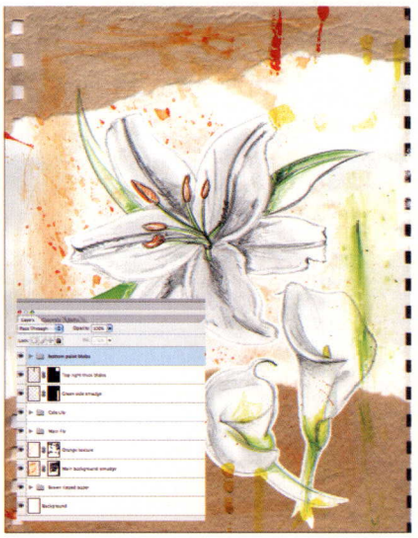


Quick tip

Grouping and labelling layers is vital when working with a collage. It will make it easier to find things and, when you are picking and moving layers around on the canvas, it makes the process a lot quicker. Grouping items also helps if you need to resize elements, which is something you're likely to do a lot during this creative process.

12 Build up the composition

Paint onto the mask layer erasing areas that you find unnecessary. Continue working through all of the layers, turning them on and off, seeing where they work best. It's best to be brutal; if they're not working, hide them and move on – don't feel you have to include everything. We have used the files 'Paint blobs' and 'Green smudge' to add more colour.

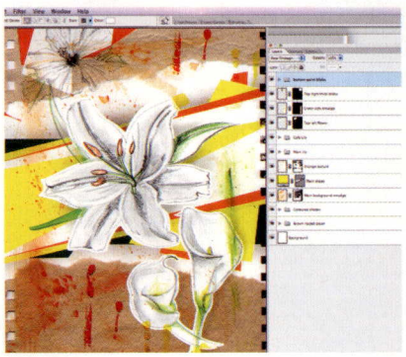


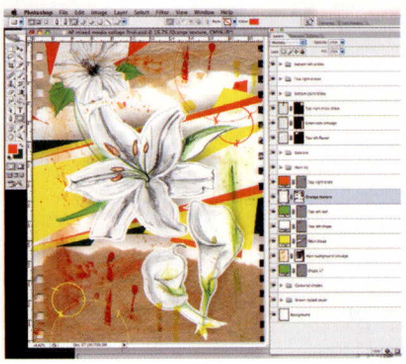
13 Add some depth

Make 'scan flower 1' visible, position it in the top left corner, then add a mask to erase the background and set to Multiply. Select the Brush tool set to Multiply and 50% Opacity, select a dark brown colour and add a new layer under the flowers in the Layers palette. Now paint in some shadows so the image doesn't look so flat.

14 Vector colours

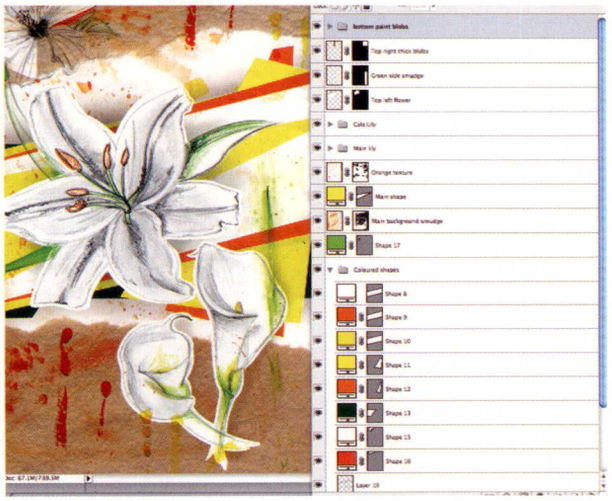
Select the Pen tool, set to Shape layers in the Options bar. Pick a bright yellow and draw a triangle so it sits underneath the flower and shadow layers. Click a point to start the shape and end it in the same place. Repeat this process with various bold colours/shapes – you might want to make changes to your composition too. .





15 Layer structure

We are working with many layers in this project. Moving them around can result in some powerful effects. As you can see from the layer order in our screenshot, the texture layers are woven in among the vectors, hiding some areas, adding depth and complexity.



16 Final embellishments

Use the Pen tool to trace some leaf shapes and the Ellipse tool to create some circles. To finish the circles, we decrease the shapes' Fill to 0% and add a Stroke, which can be found in the 'Add a layer style' menu at the bottom of the Layers palette. Nothing is fixed, so you can play with the composition until you're happy with it.

> "The texture layers are woven in among the vectors, hiding some areas, adding depth and complexity"

EXPERT TRANSFORMATIONS

We show you how to re-create these entertaining retouch effects to develop your own real-life manga girl

Advanced
Photoshop
Create the cover
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Our expert

Adam Smith
www.advancedphotoshop.co.uk/user/Adam

Adam tries his hand at more new styles, discovering fresh techniques and applying his long-standing Photoshop skills.

Source files

This month's tutorial resources can be easily sourced from Stock.XCHNG – see the file numbers in the supplied Word document. The main model image can be purchased at iStockphoto, but we have also included our own model image sample pack so you have a selection. You'll also find the 'Manga lighting.acv' file to help you along the way.

Manga styles have long been a favourite with designers and popular culture fans alike. The portrayal of manga girls in particular is rampant among design forums such as deviantART, as well as through popular media formats, including comics, television and cinema.

Now even Photoshop's photo-editing techniques are being exploited to create morphic styles, taking the realism of manga girls to the next level. We couldn't ignore this recent trend and the entertaining techniques it involves, so we have produced our very own real-life manga character effects workshop.

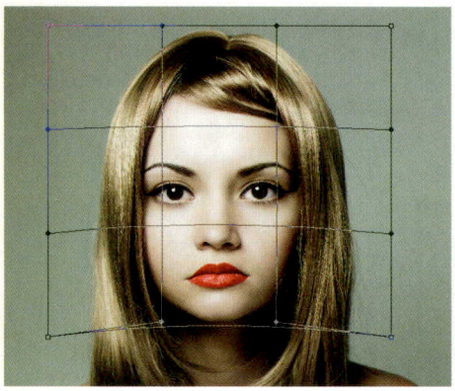
We take you through a host of methods, revealing how to use the intuitive Liquify filter, along with standard selection and layering styles, to create the exaggerated features expected of this genre.

The layer mask and blending modes also become essential in achieving top results. Colour adjustment options feature heavily so you too can edit and adjust bold colour schemes – ones that fit in with both the world of manga and your own taste.

During the tutorial, we'll also reveal how to add cool hairstyle effects, again using little more than selection and layer mask tools, and uncover how to build up the illusion of depth, through additional image elements and careful use of blur filters. This plethora of techniques and tools come together to create a professional and appealing manga girl portrait that's a total transformation from the original model image.

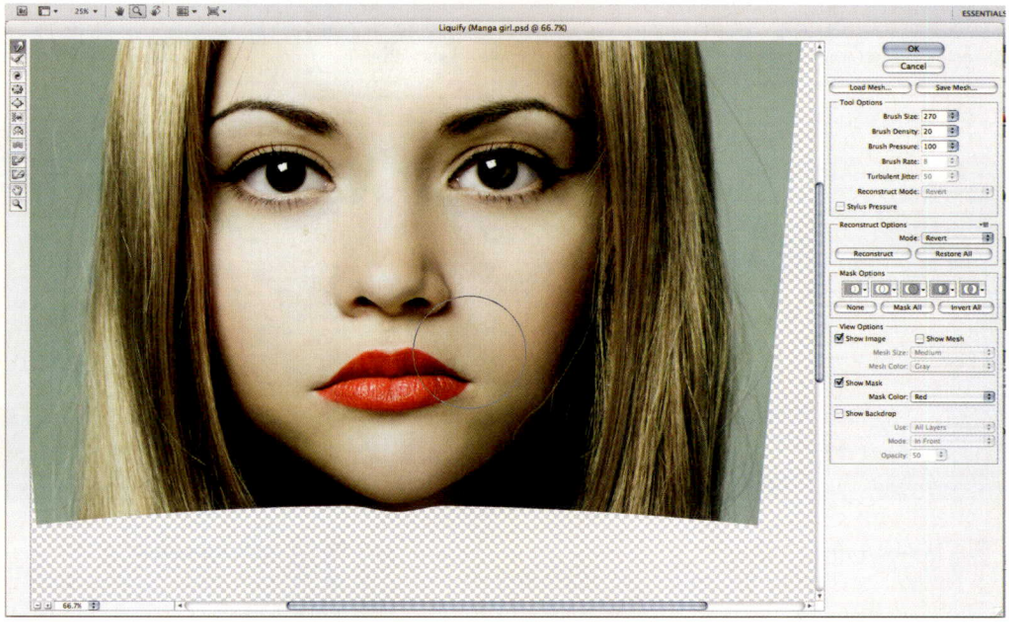
01 Adjust head and features

Begin by activating your Rectangular Marquee tool and make a selection around your model's head. Press Cmd/Ctrl+J, duplicating a new layer then use Edit>Transform>Scale to increase head size. Use Transform>Perspective to increase the top of the head, narrow the chin, then apply Transform>Warp, bringing facial features back up to a profile position.



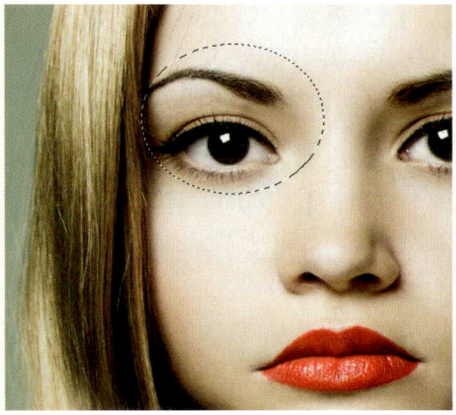
02 Liquify face sculpting

Apply a layer mask to your new head layer and integrate noticeable edges by erasing them with a soft-edged 70% black brush. With this layer active select Filter>Liquify. Zoom in at around 66% and select the Forward Warp tool. Set Brush Size at 270, Brush Density at 20, Pressure at 100, Rate at 8 and Turbulent Jitter at 50.



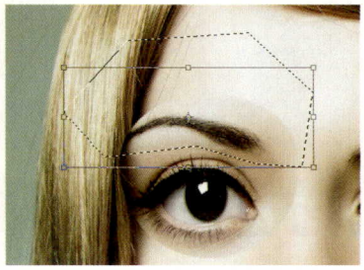
03 Eye selections

Apply this brush steadily to the jaw line, straightening it and ending the chin in a point. Activate the Elliptical Marquee tool and make selections around one of your model's eyes. Press Cmd/Ctrl+J. We'll work with the eyes first, as they dictate the ratios of the bridge of the nose, which will have a knock-on effect when it comes to other facial feature ratios.



04 Eye size adjustments

Use the Transform>Scale tool to increase the size of your new eye layer by about 50%, holding Shift. Tweak this further by decreasing horizontally and increasing vertically, creating an authentic manga-style iris and pupil shape. Your eyebrow may be awkward so reselect this with selection tools and decrease size vertically.

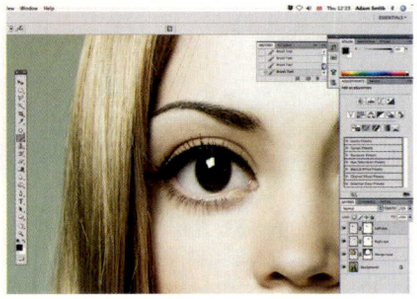


Quick tip

As with all retouch projects – be it commercial or personal – don't go shooting in the dark. Take time to address amendments and mark up your model image with correction notes. This will serve as a constant reminder of what you are trying to achieve, and you won't miss anything out, which can easily happen to us all.

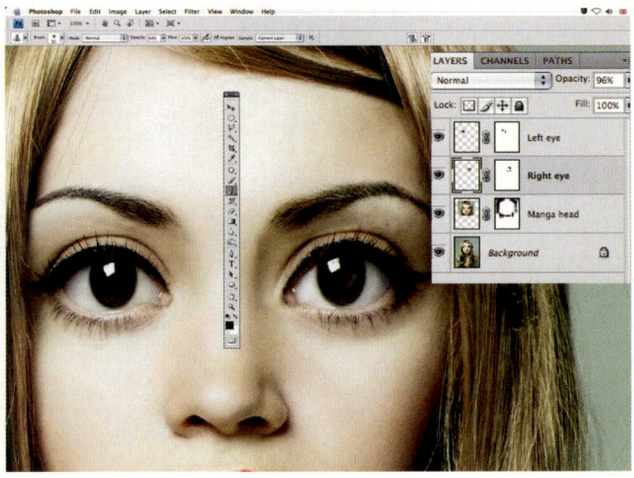
05 Integrate with layer masks

Time to integrate edges once more, so apply a layer mask and work away edges with a soft-edged 70% black brush. Brush percentages may need decreasing when working in shadow areas. Try and obtain overlapping eyelashes on hair, as this is a style associated with manga girls. Check the example for guidance.



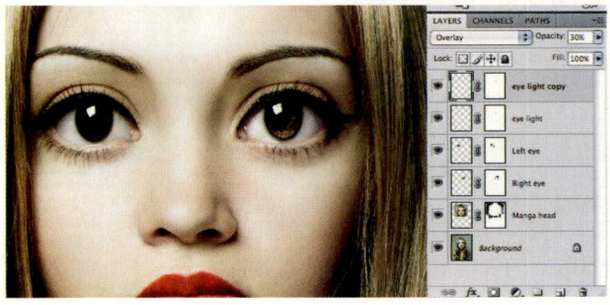
06 Rectify errors

You may notice discrepancies when working attentively in Step 5. For example, decreasing eyebrow size may leave noticeable hard edge overlaps. These can be remedied by zooming in and applying Clone tools. Also, thin out eyebrows by applying the Clone Stamp tool at around 65% Opacity.



07 Apply the Dodge tool

Select the Pen Shape tool and draw a white shape that traces around the bottom of the iris. Ctrl/right-click the shape layer and select Rasterize, applying an Overlay blending mode. Add a layer mask and integrate edges. Duplicate the layer shape, decreasing Opacity to 30%.



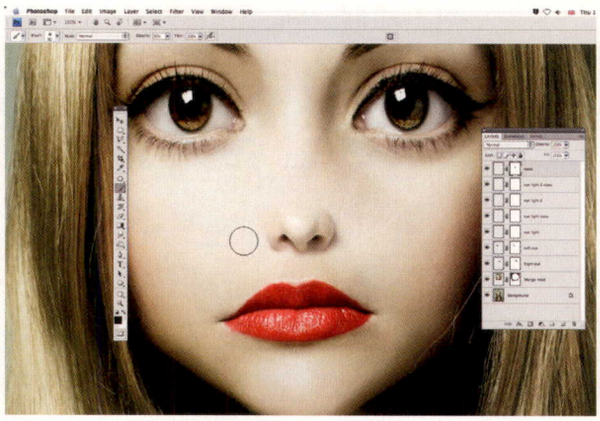
Step-by-step Workshop

08 Patch tool adjustments

Let's move on to our model's nose. As with the eyes, make a selection around it and Cmd/Ctrl+J, duplicating a new layer. Before we descale this, activate your model head layer and use the Patch tool, set to New Selection and Destination, draw around clear skin areas and place these over your model's nose – thus cloning it out and retaining pore textures.

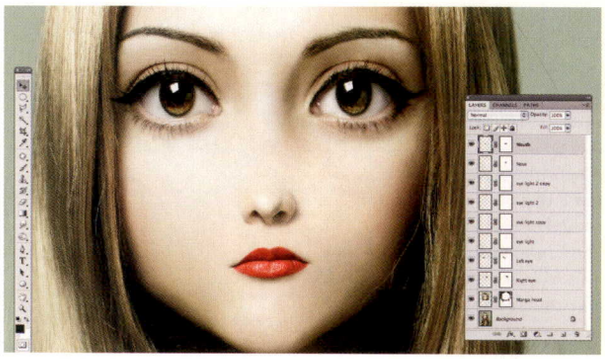
09 Proportion and integration

Now decrease your nose by around 200% and select Filter>Liquify, using the same settings as before to reshape the nose. Make it look more narrow and pointed. Once satisfied, select Image> Adjustments>Levels, and apply the following values – Input Levels 6, 1.50 and 255, Output Levels 25 and 255. Finally apply a layer mask and integrate edges with it.



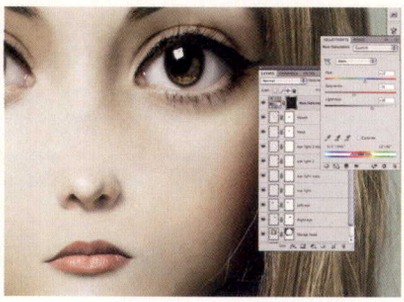
10 Get lippy!

You can adjust the exposure of the nose accordingly, reintroducing shadow value beneath the nostrils, by applying the Burn tool, set to Midtones at 35%. You can now edit the mouth in the same way as the nose (see Step 8). Take time to reposition both layers, getting an appropriate space between the two.



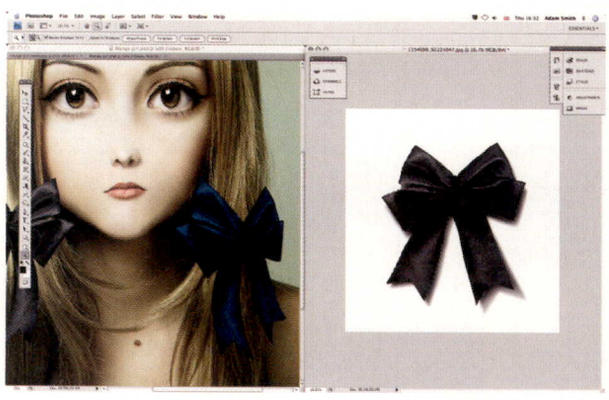
11 Edit lip tones

Many manga girls have neutral-coloured lips or none at all, however the latter isn't an option for us. So activate your lips layer, then select Hue/Saturation from the Layers palette. Set the drop option to Red, setting Hue at 12, Saturation at -18, and Brightness at +32. Mask away any overlap outside the lip area.



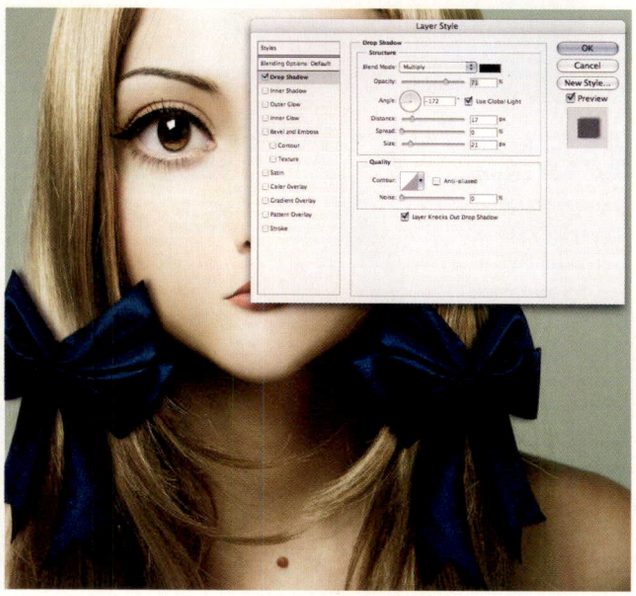
12 Apply hair ties

Open SXC's 'Black Ribbon' image (see the link on the disc), and use the Pen Path tool to select. Activate your Path palette, Cmd/Ctrl-click the layer thumbnail, activating your selection, then import to your image. Use the Transform tools to rescale and position the ribbons, before applying a blue Color Overlay, set to 95% Opacity and Multiply.



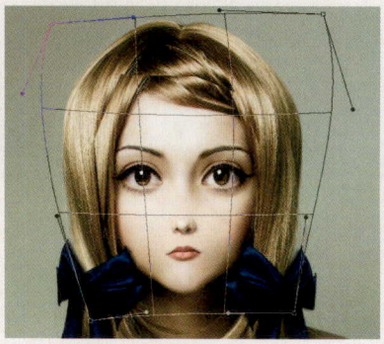
13 Layer effects

Once you've applied Color Overlay effects to both ribbon layers, Ctrl/right-click these and turn both into Smart Objects. Apply a Drop Shadow effect to one of your ribbon layers, selected from the Layer Style options. When finished, transform it into a Smart Object again. Do the same for your other ribbon layer, then Ctrl/right-click both, and select Rasterize. Use the Liquify filter to morph ribbon shape.



Hair lift

Manga hairstyles vary and, in our case, the model we've used already has stylised hair. However, it does need a bit of a lift as big hair is always better when conforming to this theme. Creating such an effect is surprisingly simple. Begin by using your selection tools to make a cutout, from beneath your ribbons to the top of her head, expanding out to some of the background. Duplicate this selection then increase size and shape with Scale, Warp and Liquify tools. Lastly, simply apply a layer mask and integrate inner edges as in previous steps.



> Once you've applied Color Overlay to ribbon layers, Ctrl/right-click these and turn both into Smart Objects

14 Fringe effects

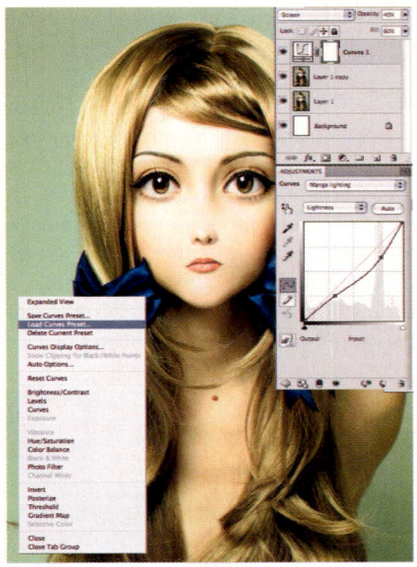
See the Hair lift boxout to achieve our hair effects, and use the same techniques to enlarge your model's fringe (see screenshot). If you are increasing hair layer sizes, minor blurring will occur. To remedy this distortion simply select Filter>Sharpen>Smart Sharpen and apply a Radius of 1.0 pixel and an Amount between 50-60%.

Quick tip

Creating depth of field effects is easy. Just copy and paste in stock images such as leaves, flowers, birds, etc (we've used the 'lovely cherry blossom branches' image from SXC). Next, scale using Transform tools to create the illusion of foreground, midground and background, and apply altering strength Gaussian Blurs – stronger for the background and foreground elements.

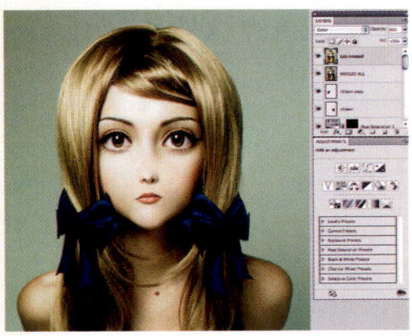
15 Lab exposure effects

Merge all layers into a new whole layer (Cmd/Ctrl+Opt/Alt+Shift+E) and then copy and paste this into a new document, activating Image>Mode>Lab. Duplicate your new doc layer, setting a Screen blending mode at 35%, and apply a Curves layer from the Create new fill or adjustment layer drop options. Load the 'Manga lighting.acv' from the dialog box flyout menu.



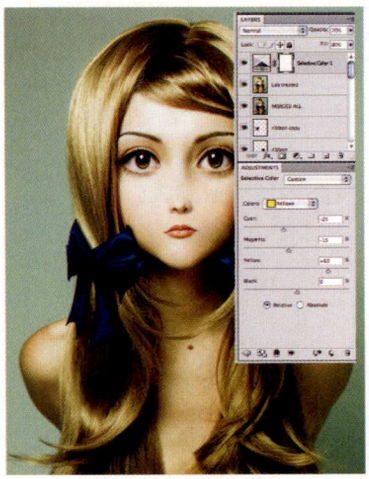
16 Layering Lab and RGB effects

Here you can tweak Lightness, using 'a' and 'b' drop option Curves to alter effects, but what you already have should work in general. Add a Screen blending mode to your Curves layer, Opacity at 40%, Fill at 60%. Now merge all and copy and paste back into your original image. Set layer blending mode to Color, 60% Opacity.



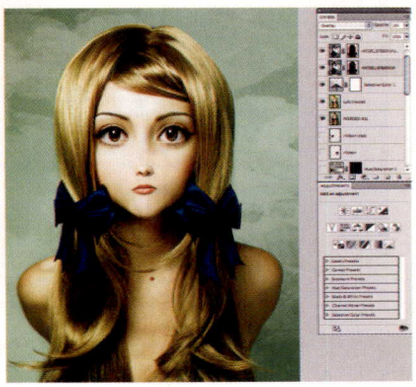
17 Selective Color

Choose Selective Color from the 'Create new fill or adjustment layer drop options' in the Layers palette, placing it at the top of your layer stack. Set Colors to Red, and set Cyan at -60, Magenta at 15. Next, set Colors to Yellow, and set Cyan at -25, Magenta at -15, and Yellow at 60. Decrease layer Opacity to 70% and Fill to 80%.



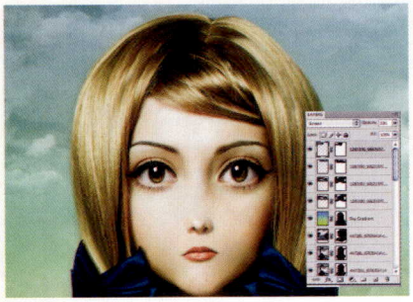
18 Mixed media effects

Copy and paste in the SXC 'Palette 10' image. Desaturate this layer, apply an Overlay blending mode at 15%, and rotate and rescale to create what looks like a cloud paint wash (see example). Apply a layer mask and mask away image elements overlapping your model. Now create a new layer named 'Sky Gradient'.



19 Apply skyline

Apply a blue-to-green gradient to this layer, setting blending to Overlay at 50%. Again add a layer mask and mask away overlaps. Paste the skyline from SXC's 'Road and Oil seed – HDR', apply a Screen blending mode and layer mask. Duplicate this layer several times, varying opacity.



20 Colour and sharpening edits

At this point it's all about tweaking aesthetic effects, mainly colour adjustments and sharpening. Play with background colour and the colour of your model's ribbons using live Hue/Saturation layers. Place these purposefully in your layer stack, selecting appropriate colour drop options to designate tonal changes. To finish, merge all into a new whole layer and apply a final Smart Sharpen filter.

Profile

Michael Vincent Manalo

Website: www.wix.com/theflickerees/michaelVmanalo
Clients: Erebus, Shahin Shahida

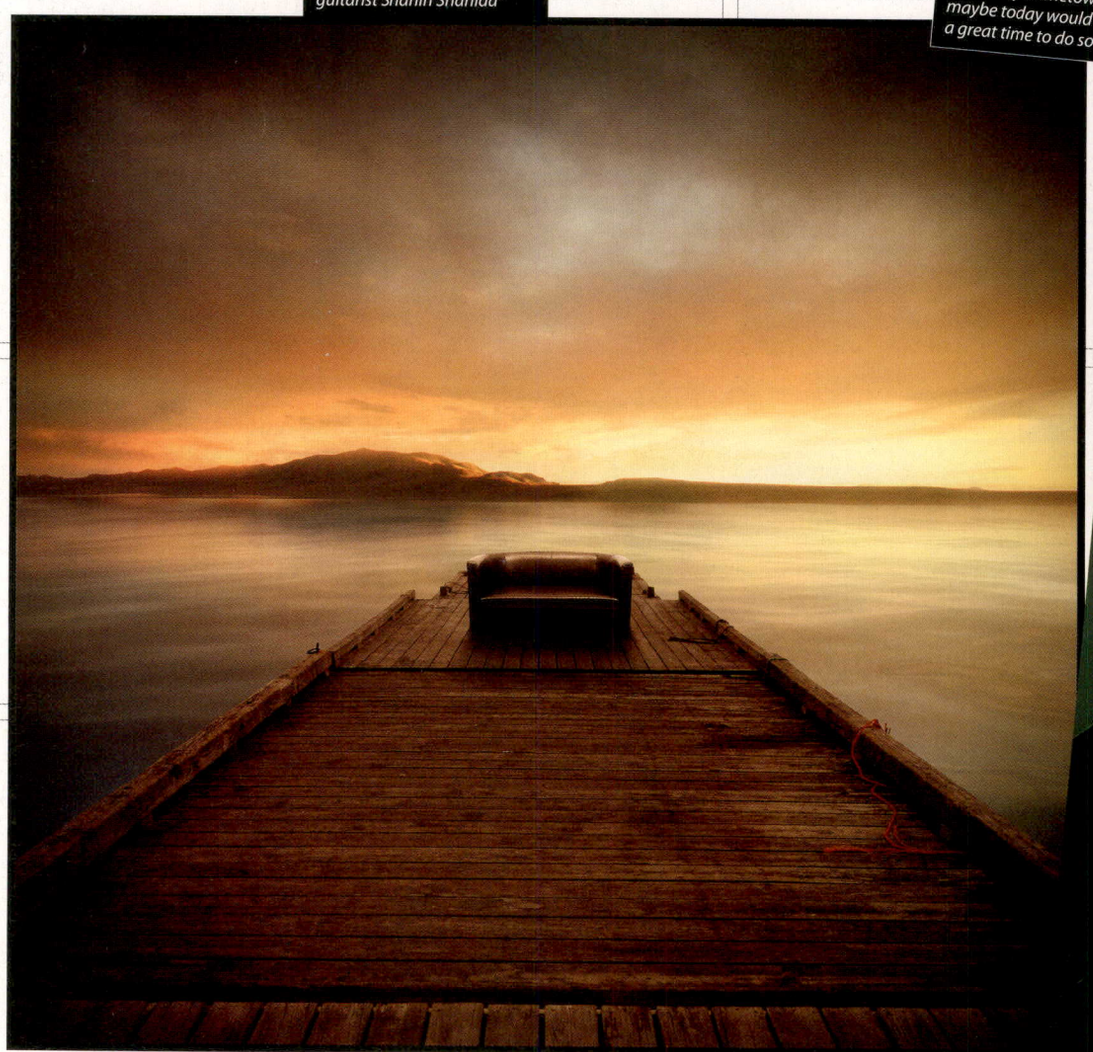
With an engaging, sombre and surreal style, self-employed digital artist Michael Manalo's work absorbs your concentration like a sponge. With a distinct mixed-media approach to his photomanipulations, his dark concepts are shaped using Photoshop – used to create images, from opening personal and purchased stock photos, to manipulating and illustrating them until arriving at his desired outcomes.

Growing up with a family of artists, he found his brother and mother great influences. His main interests lie in love, art, music and the paranormal. "Since I was a child I have been trying to create worlds and characters of my own, through pen and pencil. However, when I tried out using brushes and watercolours, I got frustrated so I shifted to music," he reveals.

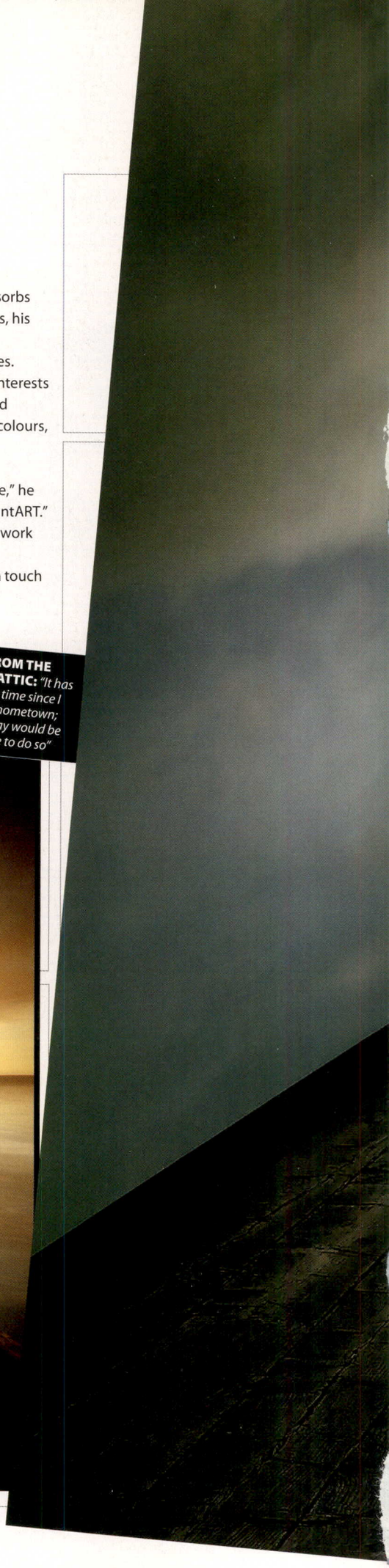
This inclination didn't last long but funnily enough is the industry for which he finds himself producing most of his commercial work today. "I got my first DSLR when I was 21 and my inclination for art started flowing naturally once more," he says. "I believe I started photomanipulating after immersing myself with a lot of related artwork from the website, deviantART." It was here where he received his first commission for an up-and-coming Australian rock band. He has since gone on to work for many more musical artists, including Dutch metal sensation Erebus.

Manalo describes his style as "mixing my own dreams, life experiences, moments of melancholy and nostalgia, with a touch of surrealism influenced by Salvador Dalí". Other artists that have influenced his conceptual approach are his peers on deviantART: Michal Karcz, Anja Bührer, Albulena Panduri and Erik Johansson.

THE ARCHITECT AND THE ENGINEER: *"Inspired by the music of US-based Spanish guitarist Shahin Shahida"*



TALES FROM THE HIDDEN ATTIC: *"It has been some time since I visited my hometown; maybe today would be a great time to do so"*



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Expert panel

Kirk Nelson
Photoshop, trainer, speaker and author
The Pixel Pro/ Freelance

Kirk Nelson is a graphics geek from the Washington DC area in the USA. He has been a professional digital artist for over a decade and is the founder of the instructional website **www.thepixelpro.com**. He has dabbled in everything from 3D animation to logo design and has also written numerous tutorials for **Advanced Photoshop** and our sister magazine **Photoshop Creative**.

Adam Smith
Reviews editor Advanced Photoshop magazine

Advanced Photoshop's Adam Smith has been producing digital effects for over a decade and feels confident in turning his creative hand to any design test. In this month's Helpdesk he is focusing on a range of postproduction retouching techniques to enhance your model projects from removing halos and 'blown-out skin' to incorporating some dramatic lighting effects to really make your photography shine.

Submit your questions

Send your emails to us at **advancedpshop@imagine-publishing.co.uk** or post a message on our forum board at **www.advancedphotoshop.co.uk/forum**. Remember to specify whether you're using a PC or Mac and the version of Photoshop you have.

"Minimising the chance of halos"

I recently had to change the colour of a girl's shirt. I made a selection then used Hue/Saturation to change the colour, but created a halo of colour from the original image. I flattened layers and cloned this out, but the client needed it layered in case of colour change. How else can I do this?"

– nicd, via forum

Adam Smith: Photoshop is not always about producing fancy effects, and many photo-editing projects need you to deal with the essentials. After all, it is fundamentally a photo-editing suite in the purist sense. It excels at simple tasks such as this, and techniques are a case of 'horses for courses'. Below are several methods you can apply to combat halo artefacts and apply accurate colour.

Image credits: iStockphoto, image numbers '854753' and '634537'

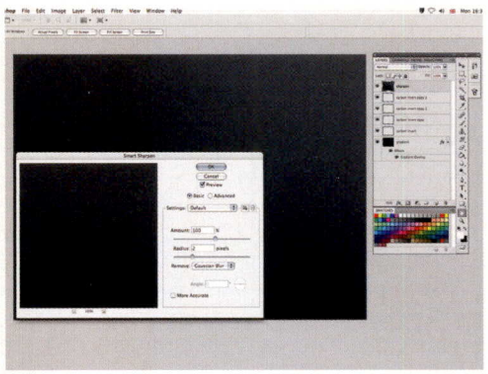
Carbon texture effect

I've seen a carbon texture effect on recent websites and viral advertising but can't replicate it using photo stock. Can I do this in Photoshop alone?
– Phillip Jones

Adam Smith: Start by opening a document no more than 4 x 4 pixels, 300dpi, and zoom in as far as you possibly can. Copy and paste into a new document and resize your copied canvas to 2 x 1 pixels, via Image>Image Size, and then copy and paste back into your original. Duplicate this new layer eight times. Next stack shape layers – two in the top left and right, four upper and lower central left/right, and two in the bottom left/right – using only the arrow keys. Due to the small size of your document, there are minimal degrees of movement so edges will align easily.

Next you'll need to apply the appropriate colours – each being a different tone. Apply the following tones, in order, starting top left to bottom right, using the Color Overlay layer style options: '#242424', '#1C1C1C', '#1D1D1D', '#151515', '#1A1A1A', '#222222', '#131313', and '#1B1B1B'.

Once complete, merge all and select Edit>Define Pattern and rename this layer 'Carbon texture'. This will appear in your Pattern presets and you can apply this across your background or new layer through the Fill option (Shift+F5).



EXTRA EFFECTS: *Complement the strength of the carbon texture effect by layering inverted Multiply blending mode carbon pattern layers, and also adding Sharpen filters*

1 Standard selections

Using selections and Hue/Saturation isn't as problematic as it seems. Always duplicate your model layer, altering Hues, before masking from this. The Hue/Saturation options are a great way to target strong RGB and CMYK-related tonal adjustments.

2 Paths and Modify

Apply the Pen Path tool around your model's clothing, access the Pen Path palette and Cmd/Ctrl-click the layer thumbnail to create a selection. Choose Select>Modify>Expand and Contract until your selection matches your intended edges. Zoom in at 200% to scrutinise. Apply values until satisfied, then duplicate your clothing.

3 Paths and Match Color

Apply the Pen Path tool as before, to both the clothes of your model and another. With your original model active, select Image>Adjustments>Match Color and set Source to the other model. This alters tones instantly and you can use multiple sources.

Technique tip

Each layer within your Photoshop project can support a vector mask and a layer mask. To have one colour blend seamlessly into the other, you can add a layer mask to that adjustment layer and then use either the Gradient tool or, for a more hands-on approach, a soft-edged brush on the mask to blend the colours/tones.

Pimp your ride

I'd like to see what my car would look like with a really outrageous paint job! Can you show me how to use Photoshop to visualise the final effect?
– Marcus Doubletree

Kirk Nelson: This is the type of project where Photoshop really shines! The most daunting challenge of creating the custom paint job is to retain the lighting, shadows and reflections that are present in the original photograph. Using Hue/Saturation adjustment layers set to Colorize is the best approach. Use the Pen tool to create paths around the front painted area of the car, and to draw in the flames. Use this path as a vector mask on a reddish-orange adjustment layer. Use additional adjustment layers for each colour of the paint. Top it off with a background copy set to Overlay and Opacity reduced to 50%.

OPTIMUS PRIMED PAINT JOB: *Use adjustment layers and vector masks to pimp your ride! Image credit: Public Domain image found on Wikimedia Commons*

Q&A

Lighting with impact

Can someone show me some cool backlighting effects? I play and play but never get very far…
– Tiffany Blake

Adam Smith: Dramatic lighting effects can be created quickly with a structured workflow. The background exposure is a key starting point. Create new Linear Dodge (Add) layers and apply 50% Opacity colour brushes to each. Merge these layers, then paste in your model, applying Hard Light blending, then matching tones using Hue/Saturation options.

Duplicate your merged background layer and copy and paste from it, by Ctrl/right-clicking your model layer thumbnail. Duplicate your merged background layer adding Render Clouds and apply a Soft Light blending mode.

Now apply highlights with Color Dodge brushes, above and below model and cloud layers. Duplicate the model background layer twice, placing both layers underneath. Apply Hue/Saturation>Brightness 100 to one and Hue/Saturation>Brightness -100 to the other. Add masks to all four model layers and mask away to create dramatic bleeding light effects.

Background washes
The background effects are built up from a sequence of blending mode treated colour wash layers and brushes
Attention to detail
To really make the lighting pop in dramatic pieces, apply a strong Smart Sharpen
Shape layer rays
Create light rays through long shapes, with masked edges and applied Screen blending mode

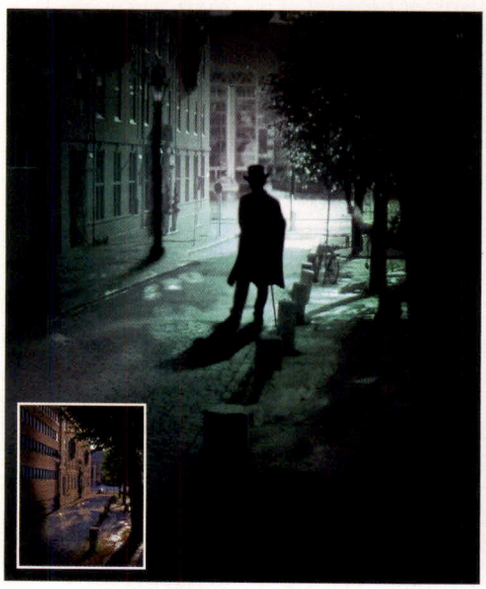
Image credit: iStockphoto, image number '10974153'

Faking backlight

I've seen photographers and advertising designers use some dramatic backlit effects that create a very distinctive mood. How would I go about creating this effect from a photograph shot in standard daylight?
– Joseph Ritter

Kirk Nelson: Ultra dramatic mood lighting can be found everywhere from advertising to movie posters to book covers. It's a great way to draw a viewer in. A stark silhouette in a desolate setting makes for a compelling visual – think the original poster from *The Exorcist*!

If you find a starter image where the light is already low and the shadows are long, it will save an incredible amount of time. Otherwise you'll need to create the long shadows by hand, as well as drawing in the figure. A Hue/Saturation adjustment layer will add the unearthly colouration to the scene. To create the light source, first use a layer with a white-to-black Radial gradient with the blending mode set to Multiply to darken the outer edges of the scene. The soft colour glow is achieved by using a coloured Radial gradient on a layer set to Color Dodge. Finally create a merged layer and touch up the lighting with the Dodge and Burn tools.



SPOOKY MOOD LIGHTING: *Create backlit lighting for a very dramatic effect. Image credit: Public Domain image found on Wikimedia Commons*

Technique tip

Creating a new complete merged layer is an excellent technique when you want to flatten your image without losing the source layers. To do this, target the top of the stack and press Cmd/Ctrl+Opt/Alt+Shift+E to create a new composite of all visible layers.

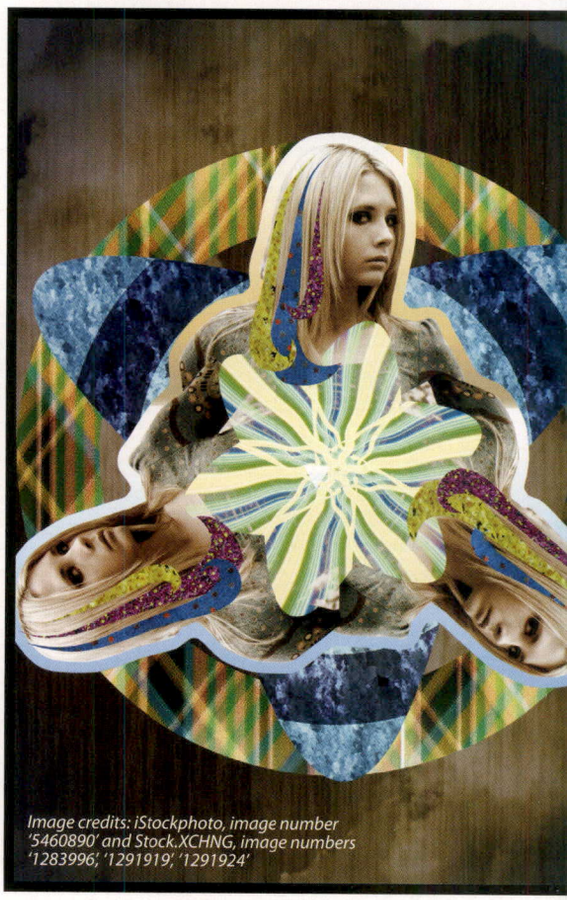


Image credits: iStockphoto, image number '5460890' and Stock.XCHNG, image numbers '1283996', '1291919', '1291924'

Rectify blown-out skin

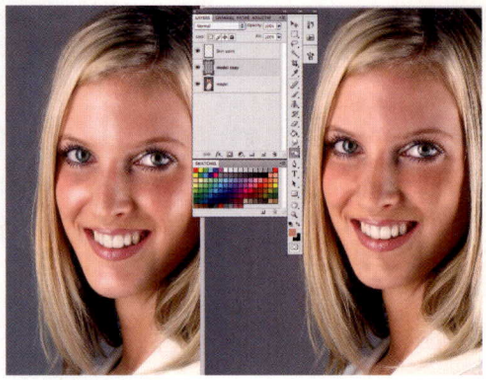
I've seen some great photo-editing tutorials in **AP** magazine. I can now smooth skin, replace pores and change skin tones – but how do I go about editing shiny skin patches?
– Julia Redferth

Adam Smith: There are several ways to rectify what retouch artists would call 'blown-out skin', though some are certainly quicker to execute than others. This disturbance occurs to different degrees, but a common effect should rectify, if not at least minimise, this destructive photo defect. Begin by opening your photo and duplicating your image, before creating a new layer called 'Skin paint'. Use the Color Picker tool (holding Opt/Alt with the Brush tool active), at around 80%, to select corresponding neutral skin tones from your model's face – where the blown-out skin has not occurred.

With this established, select a soft-edged brush and paint over your model's defected blown-out skin areas, not being too meticulous, but always staying within the borders of the skin in general. You can use the Smudge tool to slightly blend hard edges where Skin paint layer tones meet.

Once satisfied with your brushwork, set the blending mode to Color. What? The blown effect still exists? Well that's because it's your earlier duplicated model layer that's so essential to delivering the full potential of the intended effect. Now simply select the Burn tool, setting it to Highlights at 10% Opacity, and apply to the blown-out skin areas. Effects are noticeable instantly. You can of course alter the opacity of this duplicate layer accordingly.

In general this effect can be complemented further still with retouch effects such as skin softening and colour adjustments, using the Hue/Saturation options accessed in the Layers palette.



SMALL MEASURES: *This is not a radical effect and outcomes are subtle. Nevertheless they can be very effective in remedying distracting flaws. Image credit: iStockphoto, image number '897962'*

Kaleidoscope cover effect

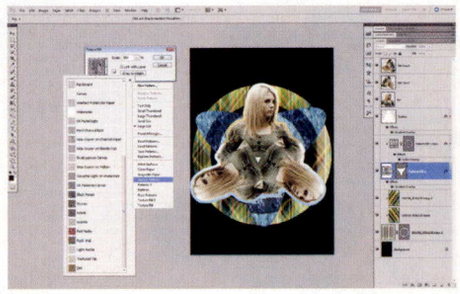
How would I do a cover design that involves multiple layers, textures and geometric shapes in almost a kaleidoscope type of effect?
– Kathy Drescolli

Kirk Nelson: This type of design depends largely on the textures utilised and creative use of blending modes. Photoshop comes with a large variety of patterns already built into the program, but additional textures can be found or purchased from stock sites etc.

The geometric design is accomplished by use of the Custom Shape and Pen tools to create vector masks that can be filled with the textures. The variety of colour effects are easily achieved by experimenting with the layer blending modes as the texture layers begin to pile up.

1 Portrait petals

The portrait imagery is the focal point of this design so begin with a portrait cutout with a sepia-toned effect. Rotate and place copies of the portrait into place, establishing the primary shape for the overall design.



2 Pile on the textures

To make full use of Photoshop's available patterns go to Layer>New Fill Layer>Pattern. Expand the pattern thumbnail and use the flyout menu to append the list with additional patterns. These layers should be used with a vector mask to create geometric shapes and various blending modes for colour effects.

Match Color skylines

I'm not the greatest when it comes to understanding the rules of colour adjustments. Is there any way I can change scenery colours to suit moods without numerous live layers?
– Minnie Beckford

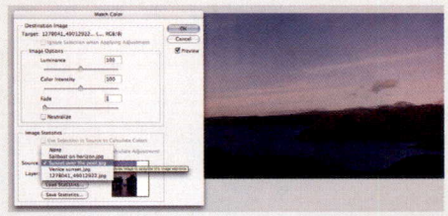
Adam Smith: The obscure Match Color option is a great way to apply intuitive colour adjustments to your photography.

1 The right stock

The most important part of this creative process happens outside of Photoshop. It's important that you are applying these effects to appropriate scenes. It works best with seascapes, flat landscapes and skylines. Cityscapes are a bit more complex and may require you to do some mask treatment following application.

2 Experimental effects

Once you have settled on a collection of stock, activate the image you want to apply to, duplicate it and then select Image>Adjustments>Match Color – keeping all others open in Photoshop. Duplication is important here as it allows further edits after you have applied effects.



3 Effects and masks

One of the most fundamental adjustments is in the Source drop options. Here you can choose scene colours from your other stock, applying them to your existing sample, then tweak Luminance, Color Intensity and Fade amounts. The value of the duplicate layer becomes apparent now, as you can refine effects with layer masks etc to your heart's content.

Image credit: Stock.XCHNG, image number '1278041'

Profile

Jonathan T Winbush

Website: www.jonathanwinbush.com
Clients: Warner Bros, MTV2, CMT, Far East Movement, Arowana Films, *National Geographic* and many more

Jonathan Winbush is a motion graphics designer who works principally on title animation packages for television and film for a number of well-known clients. He originally wanted to get into videogame design, but lacked fine drawing skills, so instead did a course in Motion Graphics and VFX. After graduating, Winbush sent out his portfolio and landed work as an intern at Framework, pushing the studio to give him more and more work, until his first commercial commission working on *Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer*. At the moment, Winbush has just finished working with Warner Bros on its Comic-Con 2010 booth and is now designing packages for Warner Bros TV.

His work is varied and calls on a number of different skills, as he explains: "I try to approach every job differently so I'm not just giving my clients recycled work I've already done for someone else. I tend to use a lot of CINEMA 4D in my work so I can create a surreal world with a mixture of photos and 3D elements. I've recently purchased a Canon 7D camera so now I don't have to use photo sites to buy the objects I'm looking for. Sometimes I'll use After Effects to add true depth of field to my pieces, and then render out and finish up in Photoshop. I always end up using Photoshop to blend all my elements together."

Winbush understands that a large part of any piece of commissioned work is delivering what the client wants: "My style is whatever makes the client happy at the end of the day. Sometimes clients see something they like and want something similar so I deliver that, and sometimes clients just let me run wild; when I have that option, I always try to approach that project using a new technique I'm not familiar with. Always challenging yourself makes sure you don't ever become typecast into a certain style."

HBO: *"This is a set of boards I pitched to HBO. This one consists of a mixture of creating vector elements in Illustrator and bringing them into Photoshop to blend together. This is one of the few projects where I didn't use any photos at all – this was all vectors and Photoshop filters"*

WARNER BROS: *"This set of frames represents what a WB logo animation would look like in motion. In motion graphics, we have to give as much detail as possible so the client can imagine what the animation would look like"*

DESTINATION: *"I created these two frames using a blend of programs. The water was created in a liquid simulation program called RealFlow and the text was created in CINEMA 4D. The rest are photos chopped, manipulated and brought together in Photoshop"*

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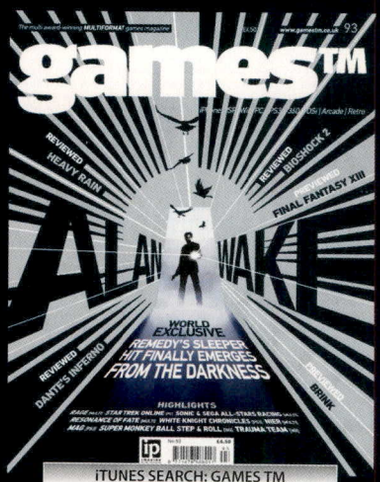

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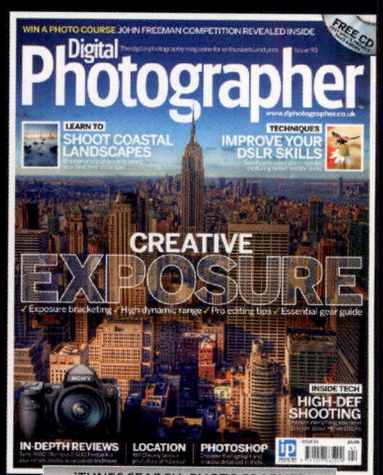
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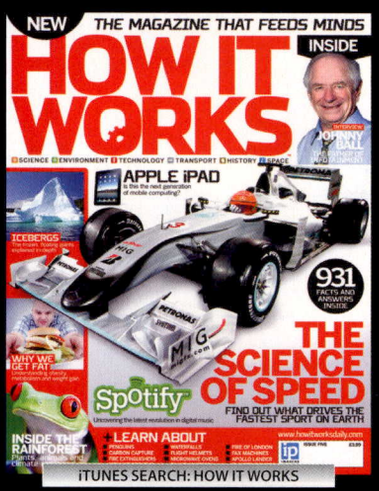

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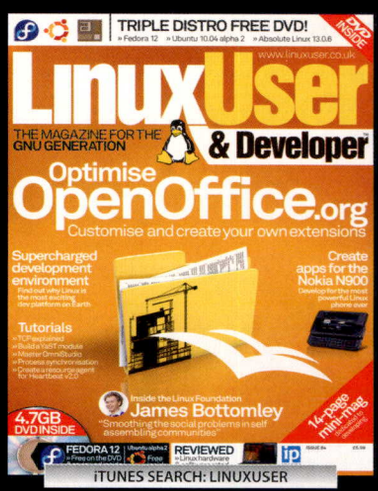

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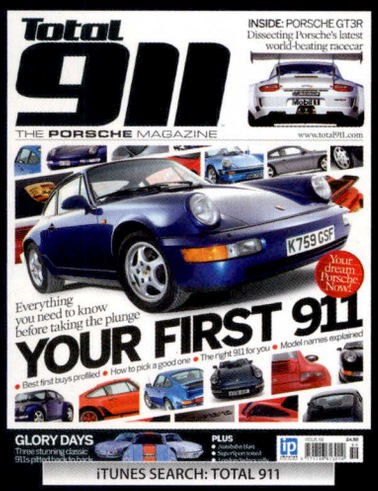

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THREADLESS BOOK ART: Right now, Threadless receives around 700 new submissions every week. Sign up today to judge them for yourself

Jake Nickell was born in Rochester, Minnesota, in 1980. In 2000, while a student at the Illinois Institute of Art–Chicago, he entered an online t-shirt design competition. Fired up by winning, he set up his own contest—and Threadless was born. Since then, four million t-shirts have been printed and sold, and the Threadless community now has more than one million members. Jake lives with his wife and two children in Boulder, Colorado.
The book also features contributions from:
Scott Belsky
Founder of the Behance Network and author of Making Ideas Happen
Seth Godin
Author of twelve international bestsellers, including Purple Cow
Jeff Howe
Contributing editor at Wired magazine and author of Crowdsourcing
Karim R. Lakhani
Assistant professor, Harvard Business School
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Seth Godin, author of twelve international bestsellers
"Threadless is the ideal mix of an authentic expression of artistic practice with innovative economic models."
John Maeda, president of Rhode Island School of Design
"Threadless is a community of people first. There may be new, fancy ways and ideas to describe what we're doing, but Threadless really is just a giant group of friends making cool designs."
Jake Nickell, founder of Threadless
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Jake Nickell
ABRAMS IMAGE

An interview with...

THREADLESS

We speak to Jake Nickell, founder and CSO of the super-successful T-shirt company, Threadless

About the company

Website

www.threadless.com

Biography Launched in November 2000 by Jake Nickell and Jacob DeHart, Threadless was born from an online art forum asking for artists to submit designs. Jake Nickell explains: "At that point we had no idea how we were even going to be making the T-shirts, we just knew that it would be a really fun project for people to be able to post designs and then for us to make the best ones into actual tees that people could wear"

Although most designers and graphic artists will be well aware of Threadless, the company's latest venture may come as a bit of a surprise. To celebrate reaching ten years in the business, Threadless is launching a self-titled book: "We thought it would be cool to do a sort of mash-up book of stories from the designs to the artists to the business model," explains Threadless founder Jake Nickell. With over 700 designs submitted a week, and over a million users, it's sure to be top of every designer's book wish list.

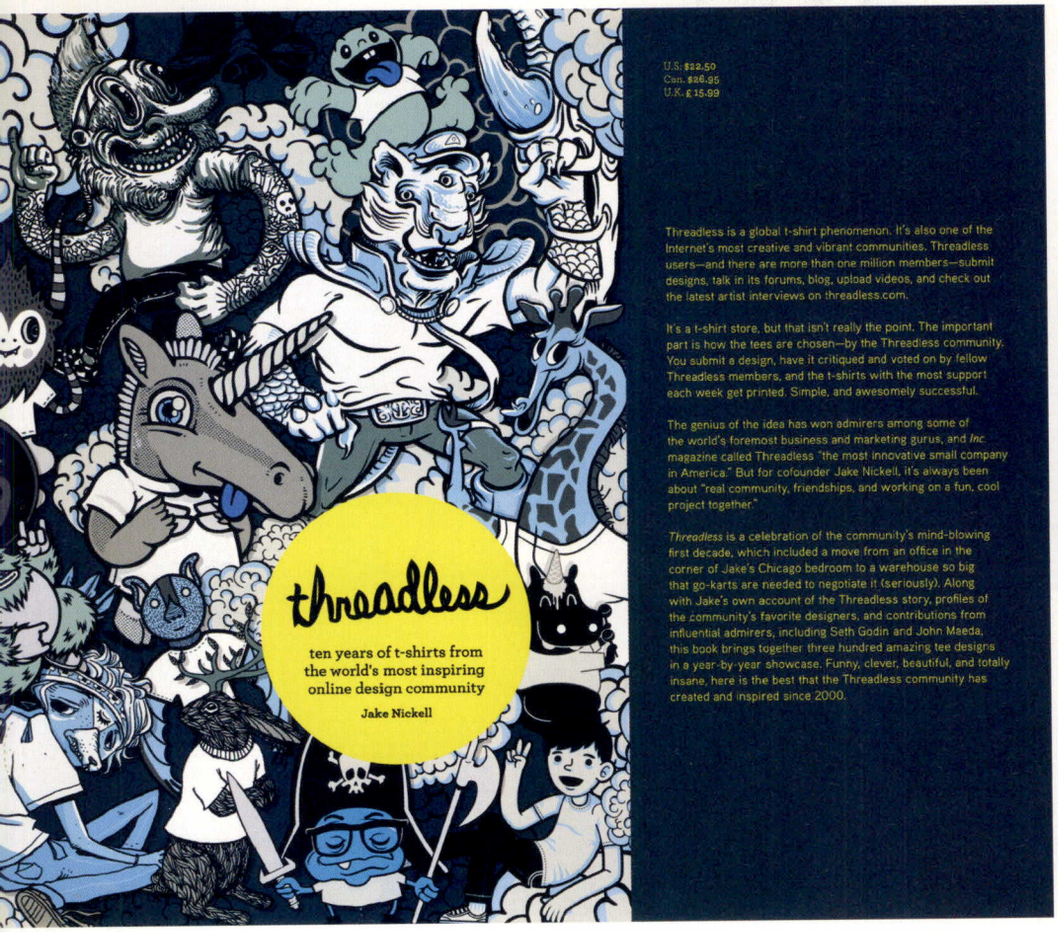
Advanced Photoshop: Can you tell us a little bit about the book? How did it come about?

Jake Nickell: Over the years, we have been approached by various publishers to create a book. It was something we were really interested in doing, but then the amount of work involved always seemed like it would be too big a distraction. When a book packaging company contacted us and described how the process would work with them, it seemed like we would be able to put out a super high-quality book without it taking up too much of our time. With Threadless approaching its ten-year anniversary, we thought it would be cool to do a sort of mash-up book of stories from the designs to the artists to the business model. That was really the hardest part, editing all of the amazing things that have happened down to the collection of stories that the book is now.

> "I would like to create a business book that is catered more towards high-school-aged kids, inspiring them to work on something that they are passionate about"

Advanced Photoshop: How did you go about choosing the work that was included?

Jake Nickell: We were looking to tell the widest variety of stories we could. So picking designs that are different from one another, that describe what was unique about that year of the business.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Threadless is a global t-shirt phenomenon. It's also one of the Internet's most creative and vibrant communities. Threadless users—and there are more than one million members—submit designs, talk in its forums, blog, upload videos, and check out the latest artist interviews on threadless.com.
It's a t-shirt store, but that isn't really the point. The important part is how the tees are chosen—by the Threadless community. You submit a design, have it critiqued and voted on by fellow Threadless members, and the t-shirts with the most support each week get printed. Simple, and awesomely successful.
The genius of the idea has won admirers among some of the world's foremost business and marketing gurus, and Inc magazine called Threadless "the most innovative small company in America." But for cofounder Jake Nickell, it's always been about "real community, friendships, and working on a fun, cool project together."
Threadless is a celebration of the community's mind-blowing first decade, which included a move from an office in the corner of Jake's Chicago bedroom to a warehouse so big that go-karts are needed to negotiate it (seriously). Along with Jake's own account of the Threadless story, profiles of the community's favorite designers, and contributions from influential admirers, including Seth Godin and John Maeda, this book brings together three hundred amazing tee designs in a year-by-year showcase. Funny, clever, beautiful, and totally insane, here is the best that the Threadless community has created and inspired since 2000.

COVER ART (LEFT): The *Threadless* book is a celebration of the T-shirt competition website reaching its tenth year, and of all the artists and designs it has promoted

POPULARI-TEE: Threadless has over a million members. Millions more have purchased tees from the company, as you don't have to be a member to shop

Same goes with the artists we featured, the business stories we told and the little side stories about particular designs and artists.

Advanced Photoshop: Have you had any favourite T-shirt designs over the years?
Jake Nickell: My favourites change on a regular basis… but I do have a few that have stuck with me over the years as being staples to my wardrobe. These include the 'UPSO' design and 'My Little Pony'.

Advanced Photoshop: What advice can you give to artists wanting to create successful Threadless T-shirts?
Jake Nickell: Stick with it. The first time you submit will probably be hard… The community provides a wide range of feedback and you really need to be able to handle the negative side. It works best if you can use that feedback as fuel to keep going, keep submitting and growing as an artist. Keep on it, get into the minds of the community and blow them away.

Advanced Photoshop: Can we expect to see another book from you guys in the future?
Jake Nickell: I would imagine so. Our publisher and packager are already urging me to follow up with more of a business book. I think that would be fun to do, only I would like to create a business book that is catered more towards high-school-aged kids, inspiring them to work on something that they are passionate about, ie turning your hobby into a career.

Advanced Photoshop: How have the featured artists reacted to having their work in print?

HARD CHOICES: Jake Nickell describes the hardest part of the book as selecting the designs, stories and artists to feature from the thousands they have

Jake Nickell: Everyone is incredibly stoked. We have quotes from the artists on the designs in the book. That's probably my favourite part, reading through those hundreds of sometimes inspirational, sometimes hilarious quotes from the artists.

Advanced Photoshop: How has the current economic climate affected Threadless, if at all?
Jake Nickell: Since we are still growing and doing very well year over year, it's hard for us to say how hard we were hit. Maybe we would be growing faster if the economy didn't suck, but we're quite happy with how we are doing despite that. There are probably even some people buying more from Threadless because our tees are pretty well-priced and we have amazing sales quite often.

Advanced Photoshop: How are successful Threadless T-shirts chosen?
Jake Nickell: First the community scores them. Then we look at the top-scoring designs internally and pick which ones to print. For the most part, every shirt we pick is successful. There may be the occasional flop, but we know that people like the designs before we print them.

Advanced Photoshop: What is next for Threadless?
Jake Nickell: To continue to inspire awesomeness within our community by constantly doing awesome things for members. We are trying to bring more opportunities to artists – ie get their designs in more places and on more products. T-shirts have been a perfect canvas for these designs over the past ten years and now we are looking to see what other possibilities there are.

www.threadless.com

iPad
apps
top
10
iPad
10:10 AM
Buy
Top 10
slide to unlock

There is no doubt that the iPad has become this year's must-have executive toy, but its agenda goes far beyond mere novelty and, for the design community, the iPad has become an essential creation platform. Within this feature we celebrate ten of the iPad's most useful and creative apps for those who need to design on the go…

Buy this if…

You want a simplified approach to editing images on the move

Price: Free **Website:** http://mobile.photoshop.com/iphone

Photoshop Express

Using the app on the iPhone or iPad allows photographers to tweak shots to perfection. iPhone users can even manipulate photographs taken with their device or adjust those uploaded and stored in the iPhoto library

There are a plethora of adjustments photo enthusiasts can use, including: Saturation, Crop, Straighten and Flip, as well as effects like Black & White

Utilising the simplest of gestures to make huge differences, Photoshop Express is a one-stop editing shop for photo enthusiasts on the move.

Despite rumoured problems between the two heavyweights of industry, Adobe – with its pedigree for producing design and photography app masterpieces – has harmonised the best of what it provides with the tour de force of Apple's elite engineering; resulting in a union of supreme technology that satisfies amateurs through to professionals. Photoshop Express on the iPad is one such dazzling feat, providing the ultimate portable edit studio for photography-crazed enthusiasts thanks to Adobe's piquant palette of editing features. Here users can employ an array of enchanting assets to transform mundane captures into fascinating creations. As well as manipulating more useful edits such as Exposure, Contrast, Straighten, Rotate and Crop – users can also vibrantly radicalise frames by adding colour filters, borders, tints, sketch filters, softening or sharpening focus and much more. What's more, executing the edits couldn't be simpler as all that's required is one touch or sweep in the appropriate direction to scale up or scale down the effect.

New to this version is an updated user interface and previous faults with the app have been rectified. Unlike iPhone users, iPad owners are spoilt with landscape and portrait orientations and a redesigned organiser, as well as online edit and upload processes, the ability to work on multiple photos in sequence from within a single workflow and the ability to now upload to Photoshop.com and Facebook at the same time. On the whole, everything runs smoothly. However, currently Adobe admits there is a slight issue with TwitPic in that users can't authenticate from within Photoshop Express, but this is being addressed and should be resolved soon.

Price: Free
Website: http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/adobe-ideas-1-0-for-ipad/id364617858?mt=8

2. Adobe Ideas 1.0

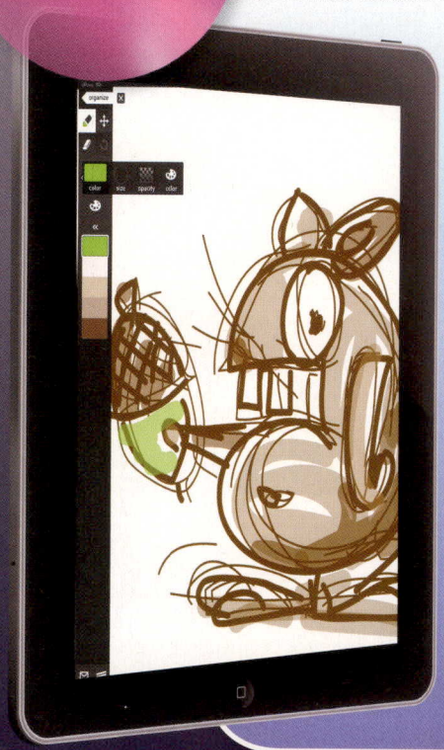
Buy this if...
You want a portable yet piquant

Despite delays getting to launch, Adobe Ideas 1.0 for iPad is one of the most popular design apps for creative enthusiasts.

Moving with the technological advances, Adobe has now introduced its popular iPhone app Adobe Ideas 1.0 to the iPad platform. Designers are known to make a beeline for this app in particular, as files created using the software that transforms the Apple tablet into a digital sketchbook, can be integrated with the software developer's stalwart PC programs such as Illustrator and Photoshop.

Specific features to benefit iPad users include: dual support for portrait and landscape orientations, redesigned edit and upload features and a re-engineered Organizer with simplified album sharing. Icons and visuals have been increased in size to improve handling and navigation in Editor, and a multiple image edit facility and simultaneous integration with Photoshop.com and Facebook have also been added.

In addition to creating digital images from scratch, users can sketch over photographs, use it to make notes and stylise unique vector drawings. What's more, many of the faults with the iPhone version have now been resolved by the design app giant, including its most problematic bug that accidentally erased the most recent stroke when the user touched the screen with more than one finger.



The app allows users to change brushes' colour, opacity and size. Designers can also move the image and email the final creation seamlessly

Price: £4.99/$7.99 **Website:** www.sketchbookpro.com

3. Autodesk Sketch Book Pro

Unleash your pent-up creativity with this masterfully and mightily effective app.

Although primarily aimed at the professional end of the design market, its simplified processes mean even newbies can flex their creative muscles.

Traditionally Autodesk SketchBook Pro has been a popular desktop and tablet PC application, but now the highly regarded professional software has been gifted to the users of both mobile and iPad platforms.

Since its launch on the iPhone one year ago, the app has been downloaded more than 1.5 million times and, during the first weekend of the iPad launch, Autodesk received over 10,000 downloads for SketchBook Pro, just going to show that this is an app in very high demand!

One of the most interesting things about this app is that it offers a unique gestural interface that enables artists to work in a full-screen environment, calling up controls with a simple swipe of the hand or a few taps of the finger. Though this will take a little time to get used to, in time, it makes your workflow a lot more streamlined and efficient.

Users can experiment with 75 different sketching and painting tools including: pens, pencils, markers, natural media, photo brushes and spray cans – each of which is fully customisable and responds to varying levels of pressure. The app now also includes new Nature and Stamp brushes, Flood Fill and Smear tools, as well as a dynamic symmetric drawing function. This really is a comprehensive art app that should meet the design needs of most pros and serious amateurs.

Price: £11.99/$19.99 **Website:** www.phaidon.co.uk/phaidondesignclassics

4. Phaidon Design Classics

If the history of design is something that tickles your fancy then meet Phaidon Design Classics – an authoritative encyclopaedic app charting the story of product design over the past 200 years.

Years in the making, the app reveals an illustrated history of 1,000 timeless design classics – meticulously chosen via a rigorous selection process by an international panel of doyens that include architects, historians and curators.

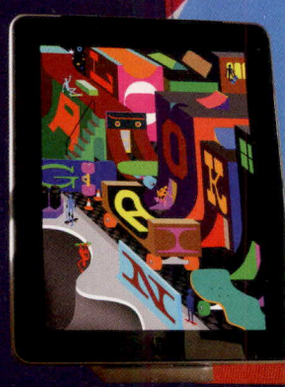
Each classic is presented in a beautifully rendered, 3D environment and exhibits archival photos, original sketches, patents, prototypes and comprehensive textual accounts. Cars, planes, toys, the corkscrew, the chopstick and even the everyday clothes peg all get a listing, to name just a few.

Aimed at those with a thirst for design history knowledge, Phaidon Design Classics explores 1,000 interesting everyday and iconic inventions

Customise your iPad

Customising your iPad is a fantastic way of extending your natural artistic flair and personalising your natty new belonging in one fell swoop. There are many ways in which this can be done, but one fairly obvious route is to download a range of artistic themes and stylish wallpapers. One of our favourite trend-setting sites is Poolga (**http://poolga.com**), which showcases a plethora of awe-inspiring wallpapers for iPad owners to download. Alternatively why not create your own? Simply upload one of your creations or images to your device. It is advisable to crop images to 1,024 x 768 beforehand and consider whether the image works in both portrait and landscape orientations.

© Keith Sharwath



■ The app offers users a wide palette of brushes, colours and mediums to create customisable digital art

5. Brushes

Price: £4.99/$7.99
Website: www.brushesapp.com

Brushes is a painting-based app that originally debuted on the iPhone and iPod touch. The iPad version provides an advanced colour picker and eyedropper, higher quality brushes, layers, extreme zooming and a simple yet deeper interface.

In total the app contains 19 brushes, presents five blending modes and caters for the importing of images at any size and scale. The app can generate up to six layers at 1,024 x 768, which can be re-ordered, merged and have their transparency changed to suit the needs of the user. The quick zoom control flicks between 50% and an up-close-and-personal 3,200%. Uniquely the software presents an in-app replay of your paintings and – with a VGA/TV output – users can show live demonstrations of their creations on an external display. In its latest update, Brushes has been translated into French, German and Japanese and features an added setting to invert speed-based brush width and opacity.

■ Paint images on the go with this app. Great on the iPhone, it's even better on the iPad

Buy this if...
You want to expand your creative potential

■ When used to full effect, Autodesk's SketchBook Pro is a superb tool for design professionals and skilled enthusiasts © *Mask* by Spencer Nugent

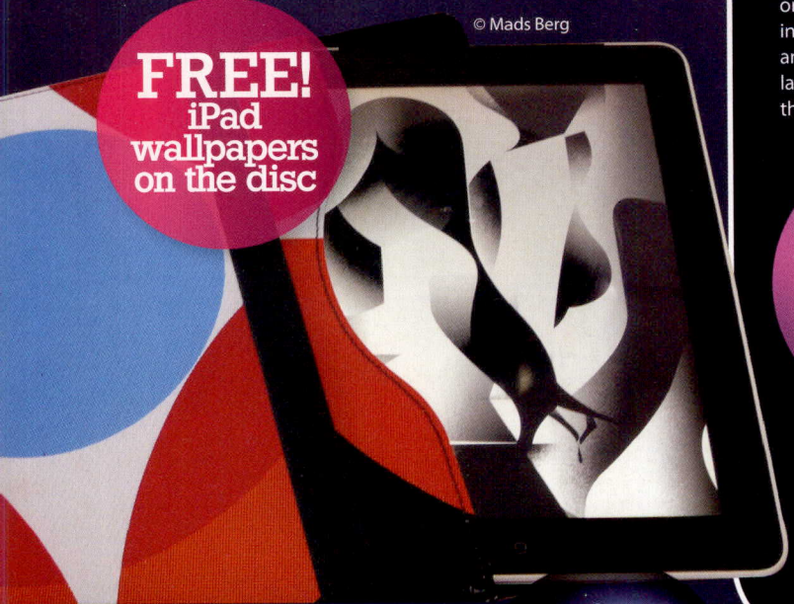
6. WordPress

Price: Free
Website: http://ios.wordpress.org

It's no wonder that in a society where every man and his dog blogs, 'the' blog app should be one of the most popular downloads for the iPad.

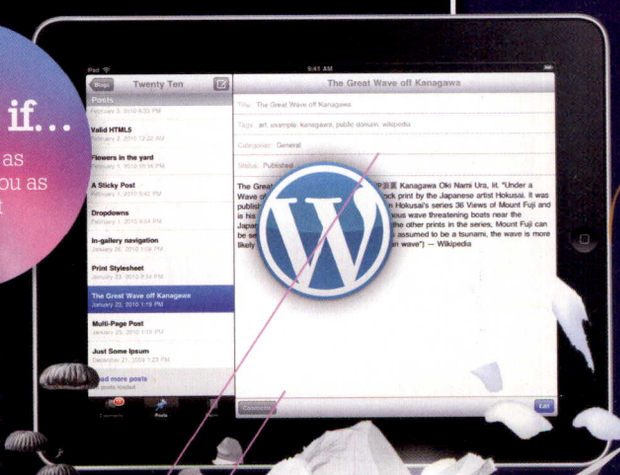
Brought to us by the company that made blogging what it is today, the WordPress app provides a familiar, user-friendly platform for creating and editing posts, as well as moderating comments. Currently in version 2.5, the app now features a new Add Blog function that combines all of your WordPress blogs in one easy step. While there are still several minor issues with the app such as the inability to add links or use rich text, it does demonstrate improved handling of drafts in progress, a marginally heightened user interface performance and several bug fixes have been made. With that in mind, the latest version of WordPress makes for quite an exciting addition to the avid designer's social networking portfolio.

FREE! iPad wallpapers on the disc



© Mads Berg

Buy this if...
Blogging is as important to you as digital art



■ Create, delete and edit blog posts wherever you are in the world with the WordPress app

7. Dropbox

Price: Free
Website: www.dropbox.com/ipad

An app that enables you to sync and share files online and across computers with online, easy-to-use setup. With this app, designers can keep images, data and other important files on desktops, laptops and in the cloud, but have access to these files wherever. What's more, the Dropbox app provides accessibility to share work with friends, colleagues and clients. The app requires a Dropbox account, but you can get this without a membership; the app provides the process in a few quick steps.

An ideal app for retrieving and sharing important documents and images

8. Masque

Price: £2.39/$3.99
Website: www.masqueapp.com

Ideal for injecting some vivacity into images, the Masque app for iPad breathes new life into stale photos. Its key features include paint effects with one-touch technology, and users can even create multi-layer effects to build more accomplished and personalised results. The app also stacks a gradient feature to apply and fade effects across the entire photo, as well as the option to adjust size, opacity and softness. Overall, a novel and fun app that any level of imageer will appreciate.

A neat app that extends a toolbox of paints, enabling users to transform photographs

9. iDisplay

Price: £2.99/$4.99
Website: www.shapeservices.com

Designers craving extra screen space should consider adopting the iDisplay app, as it comfortably turns the iPad device into a convenient side monitor – increasing the screen area of the accompanying computer's LCD. To utilise the gadget in this fashion, designers must have Wi-Fi connectivity, and Mac users require an Intel-based Mac running Snow Leopard (Mac OS X 10.5 or higher), whereas PC users will need Windows XP. In the latest version of the app – 1.1 – users benefit from significant speed increases, landscape orientation and a right-click shortcut has been integrated for improved user navigation.

Buy this if...
You need more screen space than your regular setup can offer

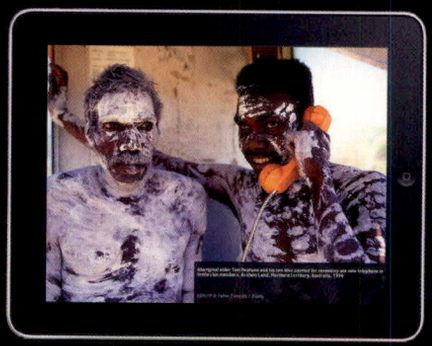
Create more screen space by using your iPad as an extension

10. Alamy Photo Collection

Price: Free **Website:** www.alamy.com/help/ipad.asp

Alamy is the world's largest independent stock photo agency, and the purpose of its new app is to present this mammoth collection in one easy-to-view space. Showcasing work from an international network of photographers, specialist collections and national archives, Alamy Photo Collection provides designers with a heaving resource of high-resolution, full-screen photos. Updates are made daily and its simple and intuitive interface is to be applauded. This is certainly an essential port-of-call for designers in need of elite and current material for their creations.

Buy this if...
You want to source imagery from an elite crop of professional photographers



Showcasing stunning pictures from the world's largest independent photo agency, Alamy Photo Collection is a gallery of breathtaking imagery
© Penny Tweedie/Alamy. Aboriginal elder Tom Noytuna and his son Mico painted for ceremony use new telephone to invite clan members, Arnhem Land, Australia

Must-have accessories

Aquapac

Price: £25/$45 **Website:** www.aquapac.net

While purchasing your shiny new iPad, it's likely that you would have considered also investing in a protective case to maintain its prestigious good looks. The Aquapac goes one further – as an all-encompassing safety cocoon. Ideal for those venturing to hazardous environments or for those with a thirst for adventure, the Aquapac protects from sand, snow, water, dust and extreme changes in temperature.

iPad Camera Connection Kit

Price: £25/$29 **Website:** www.apple.com

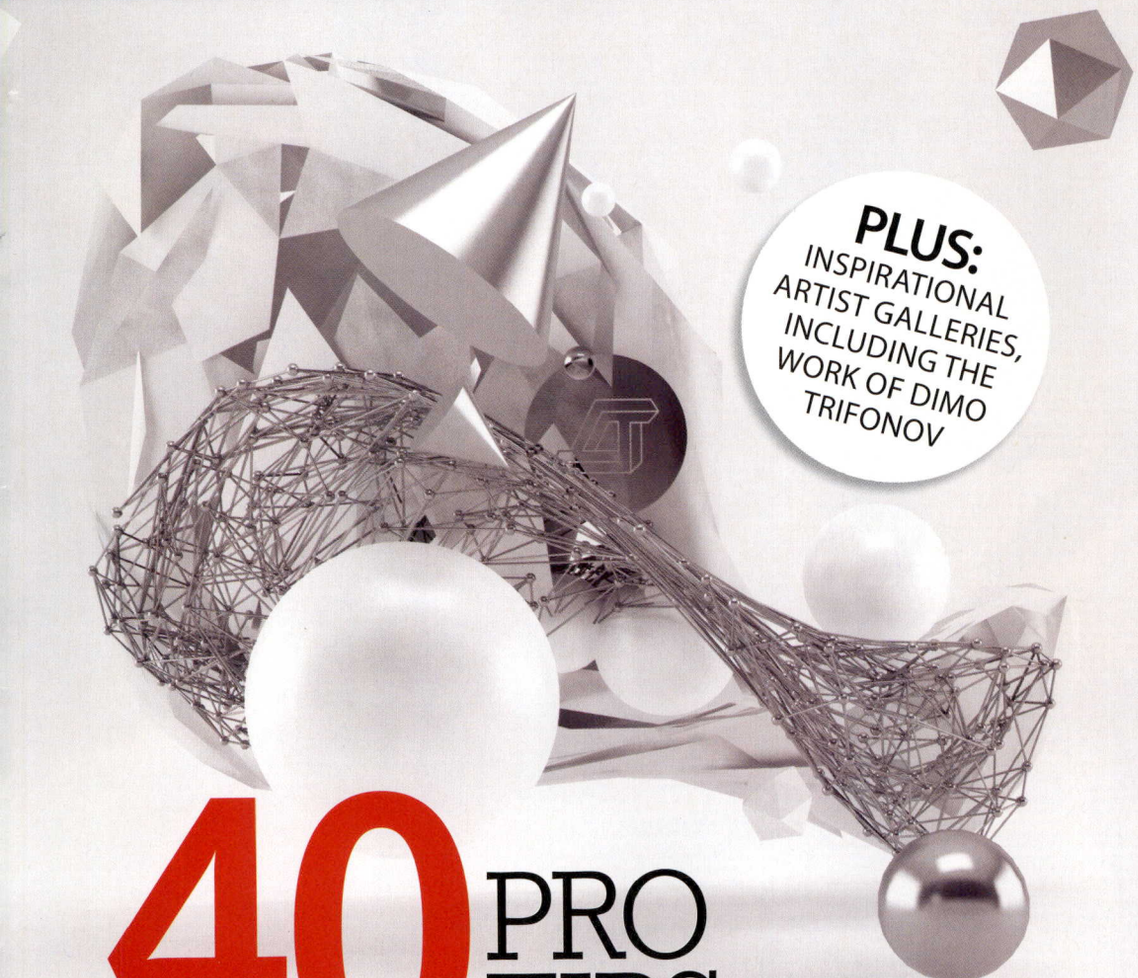
This handy little adapter gives users two ways to import photos and videos from their digital camera to their iPad in a flash. Option one is using the camera's USB cable to transfer files, whereas option two allows users to download data from the camera's SD memory card.

Recycled leather case for Apple iPad

Price: £35/$50 **Website:** www.proporta.com

As beautiful as we believe the iPad is, it isn't perfect and one of its minor flaws is its inability to stand upright – and that's where dual-purpose cases come in. Not only do they protect our devices from life's little bumps and scratches, but they also double as portable stands. This particular item is made from 100 per cent recycled leather and features a natural hessian lining.

Next issue



PLUS: INSPIRATIONAL ARTIST GALLERIES, INCLUDING THE WORK OF DIMO TRIFONOV

40 PRO TIPS

Top Photoshop experts unveil the secrets of taking your artwork from good to great

Photoshop & CINEMA 4D

The first in a new series of tutorials looking at how Photoshop can be used with other software programs

Shoot your own stock

In-depth guide to photographing your own models, landscapes and textures for use in digital art projects

WORKSHOP: TRANSFORM SMOKE
Warp photos of smoke into a fiery Oriental dragon

WORKSHOP: CROSS PROCESSING
Give your portrait pictures a vintage look

WORKSHOP: PAINT WITH LIGHT
Learn how to illuminate your digital paintings

RESOURCES: GIFT GUIDE
Perfect presents for creatives whatever the occasion

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Visit the **Advanced Photoshop** online shop at **www.imagineshop.co.uk** for back issues, books and merchandise

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Please note that contents are subject to change

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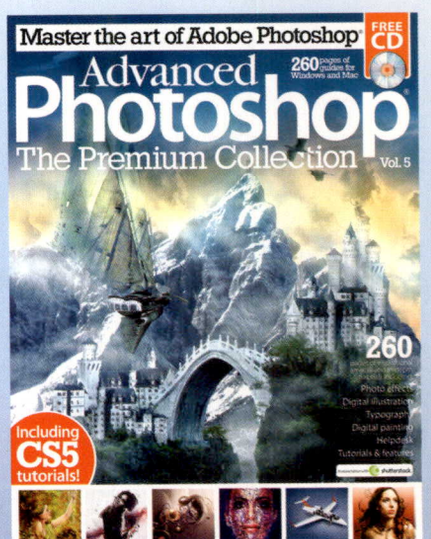

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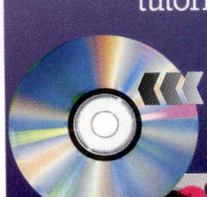
PLUS: Dedicated CS5 tutorials and features



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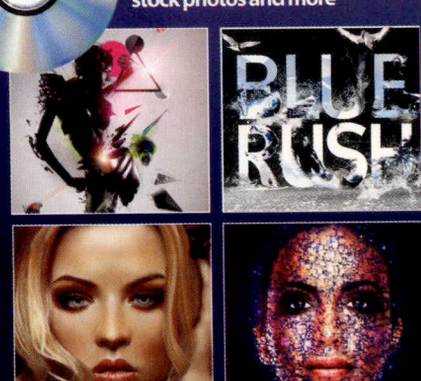


Buy your copy today!

imagineshop.co.uk

BATTLEFIELD: *"This was inspired by one of the best artists ever, Ralph McQuarrie. The initial sketch had a simple one-point perspective, but I tried to experiment with something more complex… and failed. That's trial and error for you. However, I'd put too much effort in to throw it away, so here it is!"*

PURGATORIUM: *"I thought I should do my own version of Dante's purgatory so here it is. This is my favourite so far. I printed it at one metre in length. The background is a matte painting, the foreground (including the water, the boat, the reaper and the pontoon) is all 3D"*

Dragos Jieanu

Website: www.jieanu.com
Awards: CGTalk Award, 3DTotal Award, CGHub award, CGChannel Elite Award

Dragos Jieanu is a talented CG artist, who has been working in the industry for over ten years. He began working at the age of 18, doing broadcast graphics for a major television station in his home country of Romania. Since then, he has gone on to work for VFX studios throughout Europe, Asia and the USA.

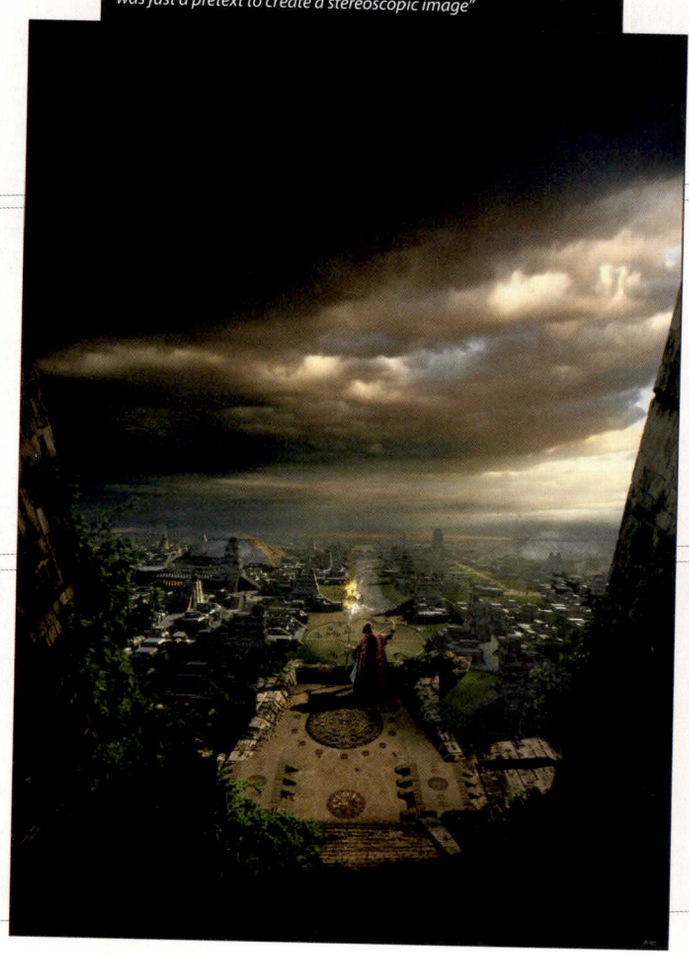
Jieanu has come a long way since his first commission, which he looks back on fondly: "It seems like ages ago and brings back some nice memories. My first paid project was for product packaging. I had to create a logo and can design. Now, when I look back, my critical (and very objective) eye would probably reach the inevitable conclusion that it was awful to be honest, but the client didn't mind that. In fact, the client truly liked my work, which did give me more confidence and kept me motivated for future projects."

Jieanu studied architecture – predominantly the CG side of things – and has a keen interest in the architecture of old, ancient cities and civilisations; much of his digital artwork is now based around this 'civilisation' concept. He brings his creations to life using a range of software programs: "Photoshop is one of my main tools, although I never stick to just one. I use whatever is needed, based on the particular aims of that project. I usually start a personal work in Photoshop, defining the concept, colour and mood, then switch to 3ds Max, and back to Photoshop for final retouches. Lately I've started working more in Photoshop than 3D. I also use Adobe After Effects for compositing or motion graphics."

With such a wealth of experience behind him, Jieanu has plenty of pearls of wisdom for those who want to follow in his footsteps: "I think success is directly related to your ability to prepare, anticipate, learn and practise.

"Learning the basics should be the main focus, as the fundamentals never change: photography, composition, animation, colours and so on. Keep aiming higher and always seek to upgrade your skills; simply completing a given task is not enough – that kind of attitude will always prevent you from moving up the performance ladder."

THE SHAMAN: *"Using mainly 3ds Max, V-Ray and Photoshop, this was something I did for fun. The Shaman looks like a mage Lvl 60 with an epic staff – I couldn't help it. Too much* WOW. *Actually this was just a pretext to create a stereoscopic image"*



RESOURCES

HOT NEW PRODUCTS ● ONLINE SERVICES ● IN-DEPTH REVIEWS

The latest news on product releases and creative resources for Photoshop professionals, plus in-depth reviews by artists and designers

» Pg 88 ..... Creative roundup
» Pg 90 ... Performance MX Mouse
» Pg 91 ..... Dell Precision M4500
» Pg 92 ..... Magnetar F3 KO
» Pg 94 ..... LaCie 526

CREATIVE

Hot new products

WHAT'S CAUGHT OUR EYE THIS MONTH

PhotoshopDaily

For more news on the latest creative resources, book releases and web news, visit our sister site: **www.photoshopdaily.co.uk**

PowerShot SX30 IS

£450/$430

www.canon.com

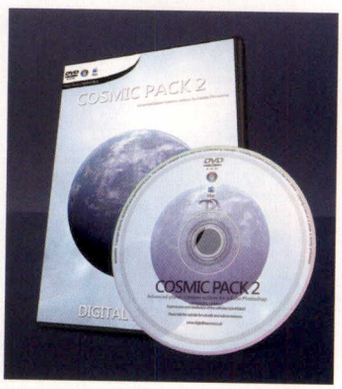
With a 14.1-megapixel sensor, A2+ sized images are assured with this camera hardware. Its 35x optical zoom lens, extending from 24mm to 840mm, captures everything from ultra wide-angle images to extreme telephoto shots – great for model and landscape stock capture. This model also comes equipped with what Canon promises as "the most effective optical Image Stabilizer (IS) ever to be used in one of its compact cameras", meaning an effective minimising of both blur when shooting with long zoom and in situations where the use of a fast shutter speed is not possible.

Buy this if...

You want intuitive professional results

We say...

This is a great option for those who don't want to invest in an interchangeable lens system, but still want a versatile camera. The 35x optical zoom is the main bonus, but I also love the chunky handgrip for its practical comfort – Rosie Tanner, editor, **Digital Photographer**



Cosmic Pack 2

£20, approximately $31

www.digitalheavens.co.uk

Compatible with CS2 or above, and Photoshop Elements 8, this plug-in provides entertaining art sets for creating your own galaxies. Advanced textures and tutorial files are highlights.

MultiSync PA271W

£1,180/$1,399

www.nec-display-solutions.com

A first-class 27-inch desktop LCD monitor, with a salivating 10-bit P-IPS performance panel, 2,560 x 1,440 resolution and 14-bit LUT for smooth, comprehensive colour control.

CanoScan 9000F

£230/$250

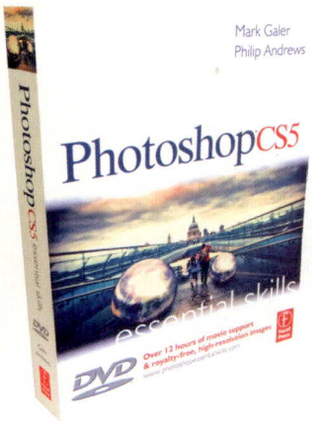
www.canon.com

With a 9,600 x 9,600dpi and 48-bit colour depth, this scanning device offers ultimate reproduction quality, producing exceptionally detailed and speedy results – for photos and film.

ROUNDUP

Essential resources

INSPIRATIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL



Mark Galer
Philip Andrews

Photoshop CS5: Essential Skills

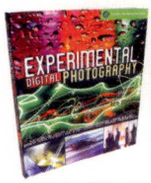
£28/$45
www.focalpress.com

This structured title is broken into three sections, so you can manage information and study CS5 at your own pace. Included are step-by-step imaging projects that help you practise your skills and learn how to create professional-quality images. Over 12 hours of high-definition movie tutorials are available on the book's CD.

Stickerbomb 2

£16/$25
www.laurenceking.com

Stickers are a massive inspiration and novelty in the street art movement, and this title provides you with over 250 specially-commissioned stickers by global artists, illustrators and graffiti writers.



Experimental Digital Photography

£18/$25
www.larkbooks.com

Go beyond the traditional snapshot and get seriously creative with your photos. Rick Doble presents a wealth of imaginative concepts. Techniques include manipulating time and using inventive white balance methods.

Lettering & Type: Creating Letters & Designing Typefaces

£15/$25
www.papress.com

Pro designers Bruce Willen and Nolen Strals examine classical examples, covering all formats – from editorial illustrations to concert posters to radical alphabets. Aimed at those who want to "move beyond existing typography".

Websites of the month

THE BEST OF THE WEB

FolioStop

www.foliostop.com

Promising high versatility and extreme quality, FolioStop offers clean presentation and optimised use of screen space – making the system ideal for displaying artwork. It provides professional website solutions from as little as £10 per month.

Artists of Photoshop

www.artistsofphotoshop.com

Artists of Photoshop acts more as a gallery than an online society. However, interactivity between artist and viewer isn't lost. Rating systems apply and viewers can search some great style inspirations through these grades, categories and recent comments.

Design is Kinky

www.designiskinky.com

Design is Kinky has been in business since 1998 – from graphics to traditional illustration and painting, it's all here. You can find job posts, submit your site, purchase from the themed store and link to other online resources such as the National Grid Gallery.

WEBSITES INSPIRING US THIS MONTH...

· www.k10k.net · www.designcollector.net · www.burodestruct.net · www.aiga.org
· www.watim.com · www.ontwerp.tv

Stock focus

Shutterstock reaches new social heights

shutterstock

Leading global provider of stock images and stock footage by subscription, Shutterstock (**www.shutterstock.com**) is promoting its services and building better communities through online social media. The last year has seen the company create a strong sense of community for buyers and contributors. Developing several apps, such as Shuttertweet for Twitter and the Shutterstock Contributor App for Facebook, these have enabled members the ability to alert friends and followers when Shutterstock accepts or sells their images.

The Shutterstock Blog was launched in March and is now populated with inspirational creative content, free images of the week, and the latest company news and updates. June saw the launch of Shutterbuzz, a hub that offers photographers and editors helpful tips and techniques.

> The Shutterstock Blog is now populated with inspirational creative content, free images of the week and the latest company news

Image of the month

· Image number: 27384799
· Photographer: Dmitriy Shironosov
· Portfolio: www.shutterstock.com/gallery-91282p1.html
· Description: Photograph of girl surrounded by candy colours blowing bubblegum with carefree abandon

Logitech Performance Mouse MX

The mouse that boldly promises to 'conquer any surface'

£90/$100
www.logitech.com

The Logitech Performance Mouse MX is set to steal the attention of home users with its deft ability to track on glass. It's thanks to the new Darkfield Laser Tracking technology that offers precise cursor control on the smoothest of surfaces – without the need for a mouse pad. This opens up endless options for the mobile Photoshop user.

The final glass frontier is in addition to the multitude of other surfaces Logitech mice can roam, such as trouser legs and carpet. However, Microsoft's much cheaper mice have mastered this too and the fact that its products have yet to perform on glass is apparently 'unnecessary', as Microsoft claims 93 per cent of users don't use glass surfaces. Yet there are many other appealing features Logitech can boast about.

In your hand, the Performance Mouse MX is ergonomically friendly with its practical, sculpted design. The right-handed shape means the mouse becomes a natural extension of your hand, making hours spent at the computer a much more enjoyable experience. The body is a bit plastic looking, and there isn't really need for a battery life symbol, but these are just niggles.

To optimise efficiency, there are four buttons within thumb's reach for web browsing, application switching and to zoom in on photos. These controls can also be customised using Logitech's SetPoint software, where you can opt for one to alter between two dpi settings of your choice. Adding to its functionality, there is a discreet USB port at the top. Here, users can connect the included cable to charge it through the computer, or a wall outlet, while in use. There's also hyper-fast scrolling so you can fly through photos with a single spin of the wheel, or use click-to-click scrolling for precision.

It works wirelessly via a Logitech Unifying receiver that is only 2cm long. Due to the receiver's petite size, you can afford to keep it in your computer while in transit without the fear of it getting lost or broken. It can control up to six compatible Logitech input devices, like a wireless keyboard. While serving as a space-saving feature, it's a shame it only works with other unifying devices in the Logitech range.

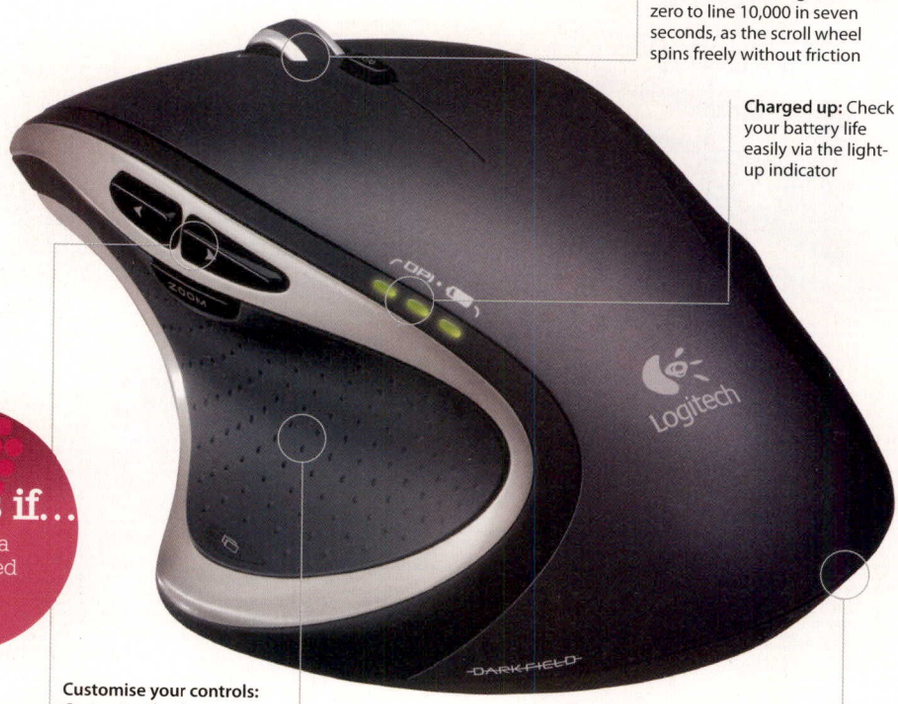
Apart from the glass-enabled tracking and some slight button adjustments, this model is not worlds apart from the discontinued MX Revolution. It's debatable whether it's worth the upgrade, but for those who haven't experienced the advanced features and extreme comfort of a Logitech mouse, the price tag is duly warranted.

Essential specs...

- Logitech Darkfield Laser Tracking
- Sculpted, right-handed shape
- Hyper-fast scrolling
- Four integrated thumb buttons
- Flexible recharging system

Buy this if...

You need a feature-filled mouse



Hyper-fast scrolling: Scroll from zero to line 10,000 in seven seconds, as the scroll wheel spins freely without friction

Charged up: Check your battery life easily via the light-up indicator

Customise your controls: Customise the four thumb buttons to your most-frequently-used controls for more efficient days at the computer

Work in comfort: The sculpted, right-handed shape lends a modern and, most importantly, comfortable design

Flexible use: This mouse can cope with high-gloss surfaces, including clear glass (that's at least 4mm thick)

POWER UP: A simple On/Off button can be located underneath the mouse for straightforward usage

RESULTS

FEATURES	8
AESTHETICS	9
BUILD QUALITY	8
PERFORMANCE	9
VALUE FOR MONEY	8

A wireless mouse that's an ideal match for mobile Photoshop artists. It offers a very efficient Performance

FINAL SCORE **8/10**

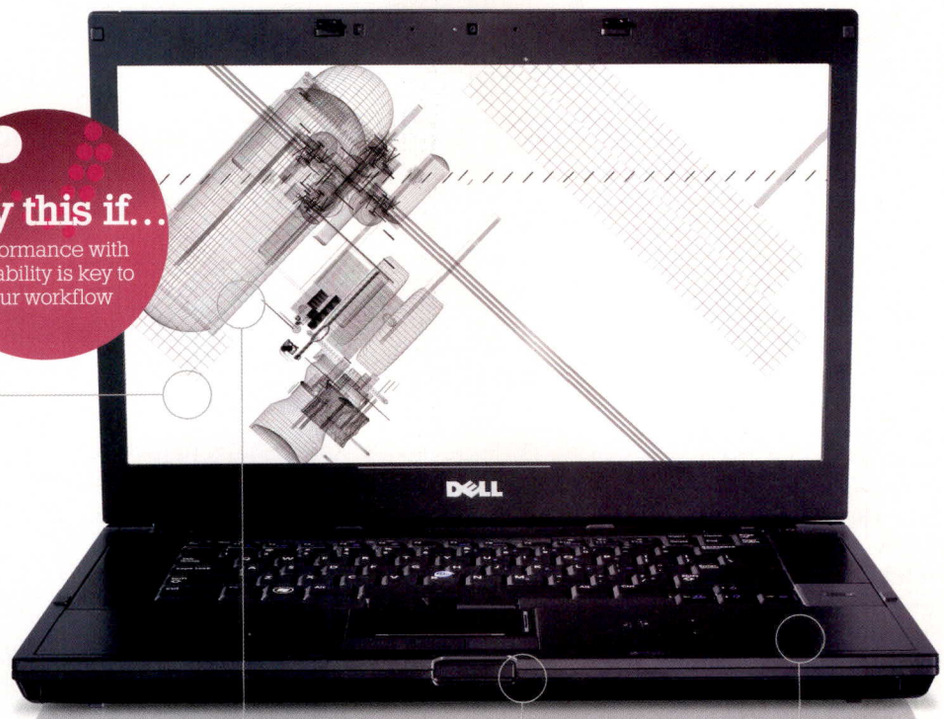
Dell Precision M4500

Performance is king with the tough M4500, which begs to be enhanced

From £1,228/$1,778

www.dell.com

Buy this if...
Performance with portability is key to your workflow



High LCD definition: The workstation is available with a range of high resolutions, from 1,366 x 768 to 1,920 x 1,080 – all of which are anti-glare

100% Adobe colour: The 15.6-inch high-resolution display shows crisp details and 100% of the Adobe colour gamut for superb tones

Portable dexterity: The casing of the M4500 is solidly constructed, and made to last and resist wear and tear of transportation

Diverse connectivity: The 1394 4-pin, USB 2.0 (x4), Display Port and eSATA are just some of the ports around the base of the workstation

The Precision series by Dell is at the forefront of laptop engineering. The M4500 is a high-powered, booted-and-suited workhorse, which refuses to shy away from the most memory-intensive of tasks. In fact, with all Dell workstations, you can pick and choose how powerful you want it to be, depending on your needs. At an extra cost, the M4500 can hold 8GB RAM, contain a Blu-ray DVD drive, include the latest 64-bit operating system, and also be given 8MB cache to create a super-charged, portable terminal. Pitched as the 'world's most powerful 15.6-inch mobile workstation' upon its release, our expectations were unsurprisingly high. However, if you're not persuaded by sales rhetoric, then you'll need further convincing.

A mid-range custom setup for the M4500 includes a monitor resolution of 1,600 x 900, with all the pleasantries of Precision technology. These consist of Intel Core i5/i7 Pro processors, a matte, anti-glare LCD display for sharp graphics – moving or otherwise – and with a build quality to die for. We were initially sceptical of the workstation's inner strength, as similarities can be found in Dell's less expensive Studio series, such as similar processors and the helping of RAM; but differences soon become apparent.

On the inside, Dell has designed the workstation as a creative maestro, allowing Photoshop and other creative software to run to a high standard. On the outside, it's taken a less artistic approach, the silver, metal-looking lid reflecting the intense inner technology. A thick frame borders the LCD display, giving it an almost dated but serious appearance. The keyboard includes a highly sensitive movement button, which is handy for tasks demanding precision.

It's not the lightest workstation, with an introductory weight of 2.73kg. Portability may be the name of the game, but with a chunky exterior and six-cell battery this isn't one for slinging under the arm on long journeys. Considering the level of technology available though, weightiness is hard to avoid.

The Precision M4500 comes with something else under its hardened chassis. Supplied with a 1GB NVIDIA Quadro FX 880M graphics card, the workstation is swift handling and rendering moving graphics. Loading multiple large files at once is also not a problem, and the workstation took memory-demanding tasks such as batch editing comfortably in its stride.

We encountered very few issues using the M4500. With a starting RAM of 2GB, we recommend looking further up the table of specifications to really get the most out of this workstation with its huge potential.

Essential specs...

- Up to 8GB RAM
- 1GB NVIDIA Quadro FX 880M graphics card
- Intel Core i5/i7 Pro processors
- Full HD, anti-glare LCD
- Three-year hardware support and replacement

17-INCH COUNTERPART: Dell's M6500 model is the size upgrade from 15.6-inch to 17-inch, with similar specs and technology all built into a larger Precision workstation – design is slightly different between the two models

RESULTS

FEATURES	10
AESTHETICS	7
BUILD QUALITY	8
PERFORMANCE	9
VALUE FOR MONEY	8

Room for expansion comes with great build quality – an invaluable portable partner

FINAL SCORE 8/10

Armari Magnetar F3 KO

Can Armari's latest mid-range workstation provide the ultimate Photoshop performance triple threat at a reasonable price point?

£1,699/$,2,599

www.armari.com

The ability to concentrate on perfecting your workflow or to quickly tweak complex artwork on the fly can really impact on the quality of your work. With the Magnetar F3 KO, long-standing computer specialist Armari thinks it has hit on the perfect combination of raw processing power and affordability, allowing you to cast off the shackles of sub-standard performance.

Sitting somewhere in the middle of its extensive workstation range, the F3 KO isn't exactly a snip at £1,699/$2,599, but it's not expensive when you consider the incredible performance this system actually boasts – whichever way you look at it, the Magnetar F3 KO punches well above its weight.

This can only be attributed to Armari's clearly impressive understanding of modern computer hardware. Using a combination of overclocking – the art of making processors and other components work beyond their intended capacity – and clever component selection, there probably isn't an action script on the planet beyond its reach. The impressive price-to-performance ratio Armari has achieved can be largely attributed to the affordable Core i7 875-k processor at the heart of the system. This relatively new quad-core processor from Intel boasts a stock speed of 2.93GHz, but since it's HyperThreading enabled, each core is capable of performing two simultaneous operations. This affords it similar power to an eight-core super-rig at a fraction of the cost. The real reason Armari selected it for the F3 KO, though, is because it's the first of a new breed of affordable 'unlocked' processors. This being the case it's able to perform well beyond its already impressive standard speed without compromising the integrity – or the stability – of the system.

A fast 8GB DDR3 memory and an ATI FirePro V4800 Pro3D workstation graphics card capable of decent OpenGL acceleration round off the core offering remarkably well.

The chassis itself is a beautiful design with a certain elegance afforded by a near-mirror finish. Workstation cases usually fall into one of two camps: black slab or garish. Thankfully, the F3 KO bucks the trend and is understated and classic in appearance, despite its ultra-modern design. It's also incredibly heavy. This is due to the most part to the water-cooling system, which is designed to keep its high-end CPU's temperatures in check under heavy load. Rather sensibly, Armari has opted for a non-electrically conductive liquid as opposed to distilled water, so in the unlikely event of the case being knocked over and the cooling system being compromised, the liquid inside can't ruin your entire machine.

Besides keeping the Intel Core i7 875-k processor cool, the bespoke water-cooling system also has the delightful side effect of helping keep the noise to a minimum. In fact, the combination of water-cooling and an ultra-quiet, high-quality power supply – otherwise one of the noisiest parts of a typical computer besides the processor cooling fan – means the Magnetar F3 KO is almost whisper quiet. There's nothing worse than the incessant hum of a poorly constructed system when trying to concentrate, so for this we are particularly grateful.

Essential spec...

- Intel Core i7 875-k processor (running at 3.88GHz)
- 8GB of DDR3 RAM
- ATI FirePro V4800 Pro3D with 1GB of GDDR5 RAM
- 120GB RevoDrive – high speed PCI Express solid state storage
- 2TB SATA II HDD storage

Buy this if...

You want a price matching high-end performance

MAGNETAR F3 KO: Armari thinks it has hit on a winning combination of raw processing power and affordability in this workstation

The last word...

Running up to 3.8GHz when required, the Magnetar F3 KO is designed to handle the most complex filters and action scripts. Professional photographers will be amazed how quickly they can work with large Lightroom catalogues – Dan Goldsmith, technical director, Armari

Cool and quiet: Armari's custom water cooler helps tame temperatures of the massively overclocked Intel Core i7 processor. It's also whisper quiet

Intelligent by design: Antec is world-renowned for its case designs. As you can see, the case is segmented to avoid heat from the main components and power supply affecting each other's airflow

Ssh!: Another intelligent component choice is the PSU, which has been specially selected by Armari for its quiet operation

Future proof: The motherboard in the backbone of the system boasts 3 x16 PCI Express slots and USB 3.0 support for tomorrow's fastest external storage solutions

Another impressive feature comes courtesy of a cutting-edge OCZ solid state storage solution. The 120GB RevoDrive plays host to the F3 KO's operating system and applications, and provides considerably faster read and write speeds than even some of the latest standard SSD drives.

Read speeds of over 500MB/sec and write speeds in the region of 400MB/sec mean working with large files is a breeze. Moreover, the system itself boots in a real short order and it's possible to see a difference even when simply working around the desktop and web browser.

For Photoshop and Lightroom users, the advantages are as obvious as they are numerous. The triple combination of OpenGL graphics acceleration, heavily overclocked processor and lightning fast storage means you can work in virtual real-time with vast canvasses in the former package, and command near-instant 1:1 previews of RAW images with the latter. Having concentrated its budget in these three key areas, Armari has essentially constructed a Photoshop user's dream rig for a price tag that's a lot more realistic than many of its key competitors.

"It's not expensive when you consider the incredible performance this system boasts – whichever way you look at it, the Magnetar F3 KO punches well above its weight"

RESULTS

FEATURES	8
AESTHETICS	8
BUILD QUALITY	9
PERFORMANCE	9
VALUE FOR MONEY	9

A staggering display of power from a system that costs much less than many of its contemporaries; the F3 KO is a knockout workstation

FINAL SCORE 9/10

We'd change...

One of the few drawbacks of the F3 KO comes from the bundled keyboard and mouse. While the Logitech RX250 optical wheel mouse and matching Deluxe 250 keyboard are perfectly functional, they're budget options that simply don't match the high-end aspirations of the system.

Manufacturer interview

Name: Dan Goldsmith
Title: Technical director, Armari

We ask Armari what makes the F3 KO tick...

What are the features that make the Magnetar F3 KO special?

It features a tuned Intel K series Core 875 processor, running up to 3.8GHz when required to handle the most complex filters and action scripts. The K series is a special edition unlocked processor from Intel that allows performance to be increased without loss of stability that can be encountered when trying to increase the BCLK, which then affects the whole motherboard. To make sure the system remains completely stable, we've installed our SPX cooling system, which uses eco-friendly and non-electrically conductive liquid to keep the processor cool even at 3.8GHz and above.

"To make sure the system remains completely stable, we've installed our eco-friendly SPX cooling system"

Tell us a little about the solid state storage that is built into the F3 KO system.

The 120GB Ultra high speed PCI Express RevoDrive (for both operating system and applications) offers twice the performance of a modern solid state drive, and makes applications like Photoshop and Lightroom v3 really fly. With read speeds over 500MB/sec, write speeds over 400MB/sec, 65K I/O operations per second and less than .1ms access time, this drive is lightyears ahead of traditional mechanical hard drives. Professional photographers will be amazed how quickly they can work with large Lightroom catalogues.

LaCie 526

We compare the colour accuracy of this monitor and its price tag to discover its maximum utility

£1,379/$1,600
www.lacie.com

Colour is of obvious importance to anyone working with Photoshop and, as a result, the monitor you use to view and edit images will have a huge bearing on your ability to judge colour. LaCie understands this and has been making high-end monitors for a very long time now.

The 526 – one of the latest LaCie models in the company's range – manages to pack a huge array of technology into a pretty nimble 25.5-inch (diagonal) screen. Setting the monitor up is a very simple process and it will swivel into portrait mode with just a gentle nudge.

The resolution tops out at 1,920 x 1,200, which is more than enough for the majority of users and LaCie claims that the panel covers 100% of ISO Coated and 97% of the Adobe RGB gamut. These high specs will please Photoshop users no end. Colour calibration is possible on-screen through the menu system, but the options here are limited. The best way to get true calibration is to shell out a bit extra and use a dedicated tool such as blue eye pro, which you can pick up as part of online deals with the monitor itself.

Once you have the display calibrated to your liking, you will notice that the general performance is exceptional with colours being represented brilliantly, allowing for greater depth to be seen in dark colours and a clear differentiation at the lighter end of the spectrum. However, response times aren't fantastic on the 526. Although it's clearly not built specifically for games or video you might be a bit disappointed at performance in this area from a monitor of this calibre. We found that fast movie scenes were subject to some slight blur. The touted 16ms times clearly don't carry across the broad expectations of a decent monitor.

Buy this if...

You need accurate colour representation

Quality colours: LaCie's feature boasts are well substantiated as colour accuracy is excellent, making for a productive workflow
Helpful hood: You'll be surprised just how much difference having the 526's hood attached makes to your viewing experience
Telescopic stand: For a display of this size, movements and adjustments are very easy, making for comfortable viewing
Beautiful bezel: The reason the screen feels as lightweight as it does is because of a thin bezel surrounding the screen
Clever controls: The control system isn't as fluid as we'd like but it's easy to navigate and understand. Making and undoing changes is simple

Essential specs...

- 100% of ISO Coated gamut 97% of Adobe RGB gamut
- 12-bit gamma correction
- 16-bit calculation precision
- 1,920 x 1,200 resolution

MONITOR IN MOTION: The 526 is a versatile monitor that can adapt to the many uses you will put it through while it lives on your desk

The 526 model comes with an included hood so you can cut out the amount of ambient light in your work environment, which can drastically affect the viewing quality when using any monitor. On first sight, it doesn't look as though it would make a lot of difference, but we were genuinely startled at how much richer this feature made darker colours, as well as helping to keep our eyes from wandering.

This display is a great choice for creative professionals who need to rely on accurate colour representation, and LaCie has clearly gone to great lengths to keep the monitor as nimble as it is, maintaining the vast amount of technology packed inside. The price point reflects the features available and, while it's fairly good value for its kind, it's not going to tick all the boxes when it comes to serious hobbyist designers or incredibly serious gamers. Nevertheless, despite its drawbacks, the 526 remains a highly competent monitor solution.

RESULTS

FEATURES	7
AESTHETICS	8
BUILD QUALITY	8
PERFORMANCE	7
VALUE FOR MONEY	7

A great choice for pro artists that offers a host of great features. The 526 is worthy of serious consideration

FINAL SCORE 7/10

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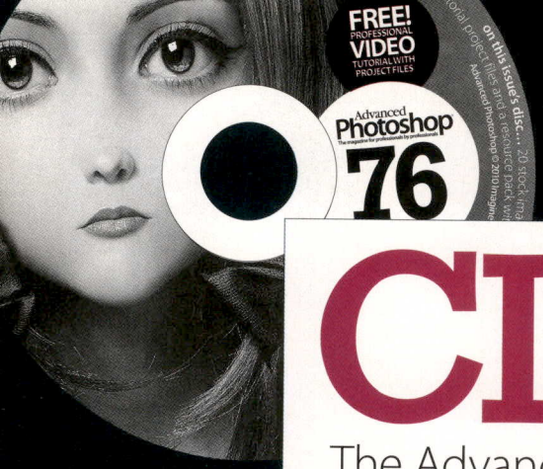


CD contents

The Advanced Photoshop resource disc contains a whole host of essential extras and the project files for this issue's tutorials

We have packed this month's disc with loads of great resources and freebies, so get stuck in and start creating!

We have the essential project files to help you work through the tutorials in this issue, including photos, scans, textures, presets and renders.

If you'd rather create your own artwork inspired by what you've seen in the magazine, then having a good resource library will help. With this in mind, we've got a whole host of stock images, brushes, textures, actions, patterns, swatches and gradients.

Add to that a bonus video tutorial, with its own project files, additional PDFs to read and inspirational wallpapers for your desktop, iPad and iPhone, and you should have plenty here to keep you Photoshopping for the next month.

The Advanced Photoshop team

How to use the Advanced Photoshop CD

RUNNING THE DISCS
These discs have been compiled to run on Windows XP and Vista and Mac OS X.

WINDOWS USERS
The CD-ROM should autorun once placed into your disc drive. If not, follow the instructions below.

1. Browse to My Computer.
2. Right-click on your CD drive and select Open from the drop-down list.
3. Read the 'readme' file if there's one present to find out which files you need to launch to run the CD interface.

APPLE MAC USERS
We support OS X 10.3 and higher unless otherwise stated. This CD-ROM interface will NOT autorun when placed into your CD drive. Instead:

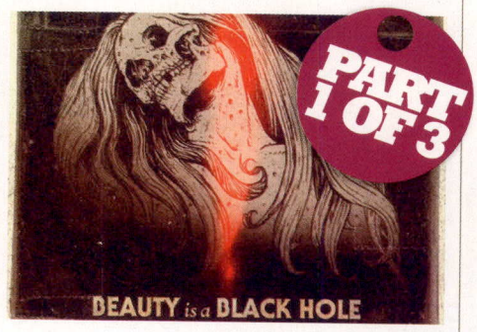
1. Double-click the CD icon on your desktop.
2. Read the 'readme' file if there's one present to find out which files you need to launch to run the CD interface.

LICENSING
Some software on this disc is shareware, which means that if you continue to use the program, you should register it with the author and, in some cases, pay. Freeware programs that may be included can be used free of charge indefinitely. Trial versions of software are either time-limited (eg, they will stop working after 30 days) or have some features disabled.

VIDEO TUTORIAL

Advanced photomanipulation

Jeff Finley of Go Media (**http://arsenal.gomedia.us**) presents this in-depth video tutorial, spanning more than two hours over three parts. This issue we bring you an introduction to the tutorial and the first part, plus the project files you need to follow along.

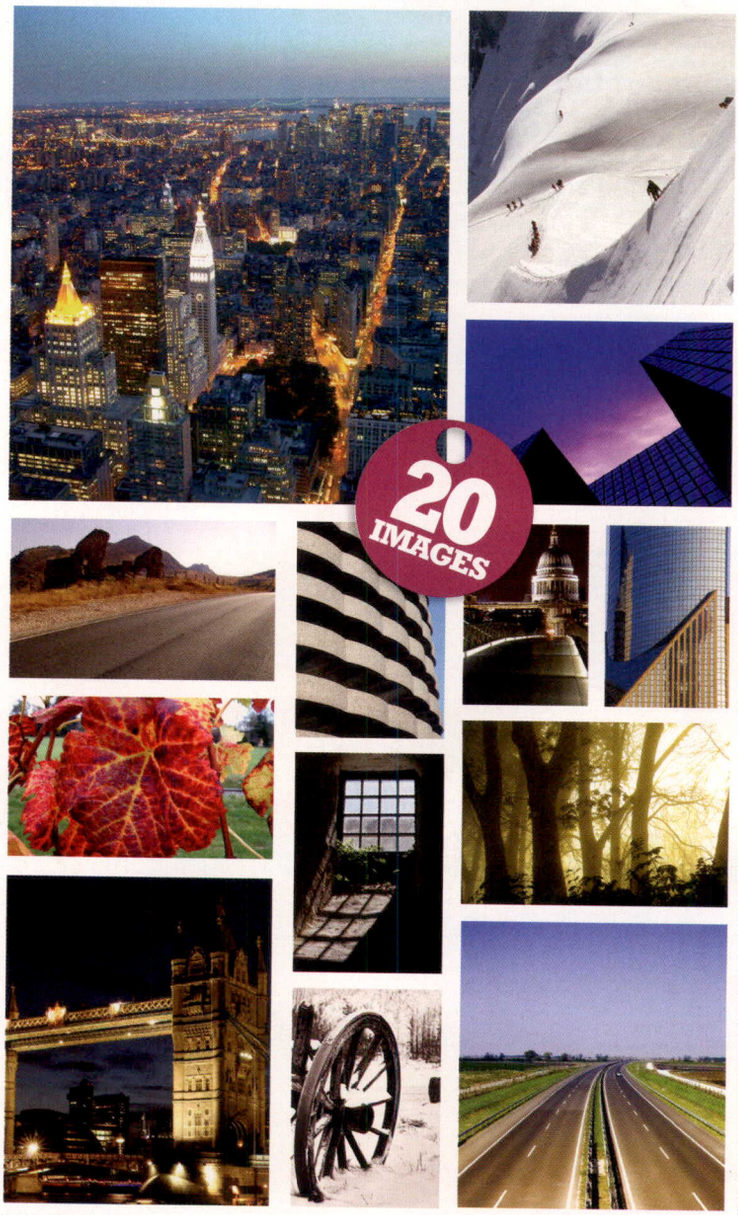


STOCK PHOTOS

20 amazing stock images

fotolia

Stock provider Fotolia (**www.fotolia.co.uk**) has given us 20 high-resolution images, including a wide range of subjects from cityscapes and snowscapes to abstract building angles and forest scenes. These images are supplied under Fotolia's Standard Licence and are perfect for all genres of digital art.

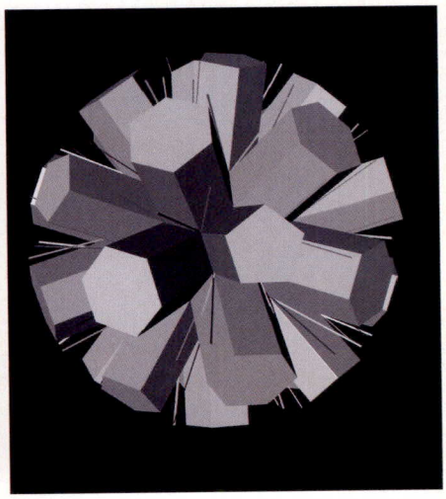


*All stock photos, fonts and brushes supplied on your CD are free for noncommercial use only. To use them commercially, go to the relevant site to purchase your chosen image

PROJECT FILES

Everything you need to complete this issue's tutorials

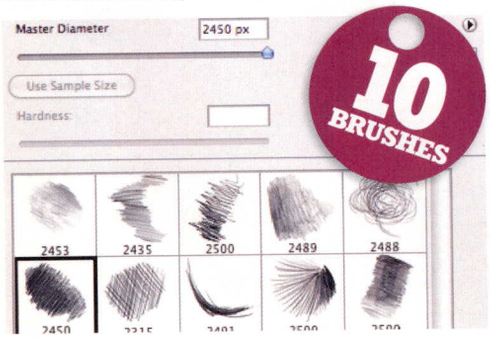
This issue we have a bevy of exclusive files that you can use to complete the tutorials we have inside. Create your own mixed-media compositions by using the scanned textures and drawings that you'll find in our creative collage resource pack. Maybe you'd rather try your hand at matte painting? We have all the photos used in the composition so that you can practise building professional-standard mattes. On the other hand, if abstract illustrations are more your thing, then look at the CINEMA 4D renders supplied for the Masterclass, which will help you play with shapes to develop your own dynamic designs.

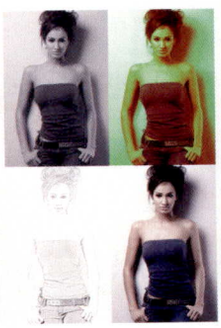


RESOURCES

Brushes, textures and actions

To help you get more from your Photoshop projects, we have got a selection of bonus free resources on the CD. You will find 10 coloured pencil brushes, 20 fabric and surface textures, plus four photo effects actions.

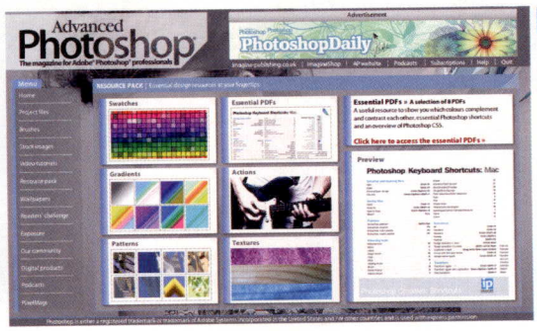




ADDITIONAL PDFS

More Photoshop goodness!

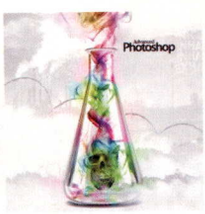
In the Resources section on the disc you will find a selection of PDFs that give you essential information, such as colour wheels and shortcuts. There is also a complete breakdown of every tutorial ever run in AP by issue, plus a feature on CS5.

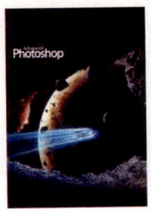


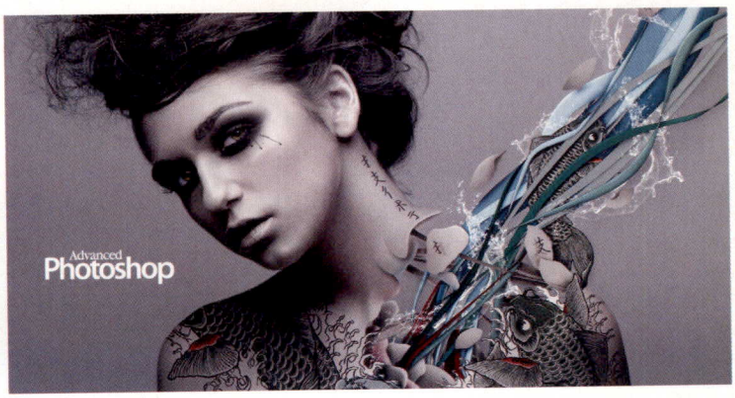
EXCLUSIVE WALLPAPERS

Now available for iPhone and iPad

We bring you eight Advanced Photoshop wallpapers showcasing inspirational imagery to liven up your computer or phone. Each of the wallpapers is formatted for your desktop, iPhone and iPad.







Discover more free resources at www.photoshopdaily.co.uk

Advanced Photoshop
The magazine for Adobe Photoshop professionals
imagineshop.co.uk
Video Tutorials
Click here to access video files
Wacom illustration and photomanipulation video from Jeff Finley at GoMedia

PROFESSIONAL VIDEO TUTORIAL

The first in a three-part super tutorial

Use the provided project files to work through this two-hour video tutorial from Go Media, spread over three issues. This month tackle part one before picking up where you left off next issue. There's also an introduction to the project on this issue's disc.

FREE! PROFESSIONAL VIDEO TUTORIAL WITH PROJECT FILES
Advanced Photoshop
The magazine for professionals by professionals
76
on this issue's disc... 20 stock images from Fotolia, tutorial project files and a resource pack with brushes, textures & more
Advanced Photoshop © 2010 Imagine Publishing Ltd

20 STOCK PHOTOS

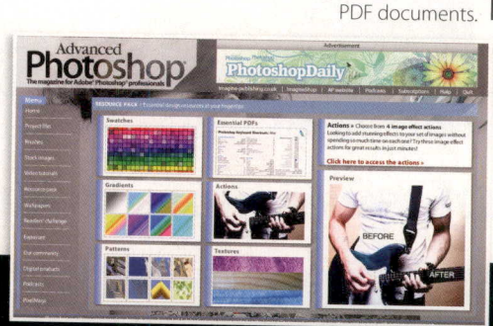
www.fotolia.co.uk

Create photomanipulations and digital paintings from these high-resolution stock images covering a wide variety of themes and genres.

RESOURCES

Bonus goodies

Navigate to the Resources section on the disc to find exclusive actions, textures, gradients, swatches, patterns and essential PDF documents.



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